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OLGA BUSH

THE WRITING ON THE WALL: READING THE DECORATION OF THE ALHAMBRA

As Cynthia Robinson has recently highlighted, in the current generation of scholarship, study of the Alhambra (fig. 1), a palatial city constructed in Granada by the Nasrids (r. 1238–1492), the last major Muslim dynasty in the Iberian Peninsula, has been oriented by the seminal work of Oleg Grabar.[1] Of particular importance for the field in general and the present essay in particular has been Grabar's assertion that the "iconographic inscriptions" were "chosen in order to emphasize some special purpose of the building or to make an association which is not *a priori* obvious."[2] Grabar refers here concretely to the abundant poetic epigraphy throughout the Alhambra, which had long been recognized as one of its most salient features. But typical of his work, one finds theoretical richness in his hybrid formulation, "iconographic inscriptions," which opens a new perspective on the interrelationship of word and image, epigraphy and architecture. Much important work has followed that lead. Informed by semiotic theory, José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, Valérie Gonzalez, and D. Fairchild Ruggles in their various ways read the Alhambra as a text; that is, they take its architectural structures, gardens as well as palaces, and its decoration to constitute elements in a system of signs designed to communicate a message—a message most often understood to concern the power of the sultans who were patrons of the works.[3]

Robinson herself stands within that general line of inquiry. Drawing particularly on Puerta Vílchez, she has opened new directions through what may be called a cultural studies approach—studying Islamic buildings "within the cultural framework intended by patrons for very specific publics"[4]—dating back to her work on the arts of the *taifa* period.[5] First, Robinson considers built structures as the site of cultural practices, such as the majlis of the court elite in the Aljafería in Saragossa, social assemblies that included poetic recitation as a principal element. Her examination raises poetry from an incidental ornament—if one may still speak of ornament as incidental after Grabar[6]—to the level of a major contributor to the construction of a fundamental aesthetics embracing architecture no less than literature. Second, she demonstrates that those aesthetic principles may be used to draw a new map of cultural interaction between Muslim al-Andalus and its Christian neighbors. The latter point is especially relevant to Robinson's analysis when she turns her attention to the Palace of the Lions in the Alhambra.[7]

The bridge that carries Robinson's argument from the Aljafería to the Alhambra is a verse inscribed on the wall of a different palace in the Nasrid complex, the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I (r. 1333–54), commonly known today as the Tower of the Captive. The verse, composed by Ibn al-Jayyab (1274–1349), a court poet and vizier of the Nasrid sultans, reads: "It [the *Qalahurra*] speaks *badīʿ* poetry: paronomasias, antithesis, caesuras, and *muraṣṣaʿ* (*mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, *mughaṣṣan*, and *muraṣṣaʿ*)."[8] Antonio Fernández-Puertas has observed that explicit reference to poetic devices was unusual in mid-fourteenth century Arabic verse.[9] Against that backdrop, the verse in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* caught the attention of scholars such as Puerta Vílchez and Emilio García Gómez, the philologist to whom all contemporary work on the poetic inscriptions of the Alhambra is indebted.[10] But it was Robinson in her *In Praise of Song* who highlighted the importance of *badīʿ* poetry, which originated towards the end of the ninth century at the Abbasid court in Baghdad and was prevalent in medieval Arabic poetry, for understanding the aesthetics of al-Andalus throughout the *taifa* period, thus providing the more proximate point of departure for my discussion.[11] Robinson observed, for instance, that *al-Badīʿ* was the name of one

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Fig. 1. Alhambra. General view. (Photo: Olga Bush)

of the palaces of al-Ma'mun (r. 1043–75) in Toledo in the *taifa* period, which "indicates that both [al-Ma'mūn] and his contemporaries conceived of palace and poetics as intimately connected."[12] A detailed examination of Ibn al-Jayyab's verse in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is the heart of the study that follows, but before turning to that reading, I would frame the underlying issues in my approach to poetic figuration, particularly with respect to its differences with Robinson's argument.

In studying the poetics of the *taifa* period, Robinson had demonstrated the centrality of "transformative metaphor," the effect of which, she summarizes in "Marginal Ornament," was "fusion and sameness."[13] Delineating the distinct cultural context of the later Nasrid period, Robinson cites a new and contradictory emphasis on mimetic description—that is, literal *imitatio*—articulated in the poetics of Hazim al-Qartajanni (1211–85), an Andalusian poet and literary critic, as well as a corresponding shift in the Alhambra (as compared to the Aljafería) to "aesthetic principles of differentiation and categorization."[14] Although in Ibn al-Jayyab's verse the reference to *badīʿ* would suggest continuity between his own poetics and the theory and practice of this tradition dating back to the *taifa* period and earlier, Robinson declares that the four tropes enumerated in the verse "are explicitly related to the *differentiation and organization* of the various ornamental themes, materials, and techniques of the 'Tower of the Captive,'"[15] which is to say, following her argument, that they pertain to the work of mimesis. Yet Robinson also notes that "a new element has been added to al-Qartajanni's theory of poetic mimesis" in the late fourteenth century, expounded by Ibn al-Khatib (1313–74), a vizier and an illustrious literary figure at the Nasrid court. Robinson refers to this element as "bewitchment," which she characterizes as "an aesthetic

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experience that propels the reader or listener beyond the 'real' or the 'natural' or their mimetic evocation."[16] She then cites verses inscribed elsewhere in the Alhambra, in the Hall of the Two Sisters, as an example of this bewitchment:

> Oh, what raiment of embroidered stuff have you thrown about it! It makes one forget the tulle of Yemen!...
> Her columns are so beautiful in every aspect that word of their fame has reached far and wide!
> Her smooth, diaphanous marble brightens the farthest corners darkened by shadow...[17]

The latter two verses are clearly mimetic, as Robinson would suggest, but the first verse that she cites goes beyond mimesis. The analogy, or "fusion and sameness," of architectural decoration and luxury textiles is in fact achieved by metaphor (*isti'āra*), which, moreover, Ibn al-Khatib declared in the preface to his poetic anthology, *al-Siḥr wa'l-shi'r* (Enchantment and Poetry), "occupies the place of honor" in poetry.[18]

The implicit tension between anti-metaphorical mimesis and metaphorical bewitchment is resolved by Robinson through the elucidation of another form of poetic figuration beyond mimesis in the Palace of the Lions, namely, allegory. Robinson then goes on to interpret the Palace of the Lions as an allegorical paradise-garden. Among the results of this analysis, she is able to demonstrate the manner in which a decorative element previously seen as isolated and anomalous—the "Gothic-style" paintings on the ceiling of the northern alcove of the Hall of Justice in the Palace of the Lions—is indeed integrated into the allegorical program of that architectural setting, thus furthering her general thesis of the transcultural framework of the aesthetics of al-Andalus.

My goals are more narrowly circumscribed, but my approach to poetic figuration is more broadly conceived. I confine myself on this occasion to the context of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, which, Ibn al-Jayyab declares, "speaks *badī'*," where speaking *badī'* means deploying the elements of architectural decoration in accordance with the figurative transformations of the four particular tropes of the *badī'* tradition that Ibn al-Jayyab enumerates (neither allegory nor metaphor being among them). Even were one to emphasize "differentiation and organization" in the workings of these devices—I think otherwise—it is necessary to recognize that here, as in the case of the verses inscribed in the Hall of the Two Sisters, any mimetic function ascribed to them is grounded in a prior metaphor: the fusion, if not quite the sameness, of architecture and poetry, which is to say the very grounds for speaking about architecture in poetic terms. To grasp the complexity of that way of speaking and hence of perceiving architecture, it is necessary to investigate the specific workings of each of Ibn al-Jayyab's tropes. I agree with Robinson in ascribing a special place to *mujannas*, but this does not obviate a detailed study of the other terms. Nor is the tension between literal description and "bewitching" figuration transcended by allegory in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. But here I underline the local setting and so bring out a point implicit in Robinson's study, when she begins by establishing a contrast between the stasis of the Court of the Myrtles and the dynamism of the Palace of the Lions. The goal of achieving an understanding of the overall aesthetics of the Alhambra is dependent upon the analysis of the particularities of its varied precincts. Hence, as Robinson, too, says of her scholarly interlocutors,[19] my discussion of the range of poetic figures that explicitly guide the reading of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is not "at odds" with an allegorical reading of the Palace of the Lions. Like the decorative elements that I will now discuss, the poetic figures are conjoined in a larger program.

The most significant common ground shared by this and other readings of the "iconographic inscriptions" in the Alhambra continues to be a suggestion by Grabar: "Ornament is itself or exhibits most forcefully an intermediate order between viewers and users of art, perhaps even creators of art, and works of art."[20] The poetic epigraphy of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* may be characterized as the intermediary of the intermediary. The poetry serves as an intermediate order between the beholder and the geometric and floral motifs of the architectural decoration, such that the reader of the one is prepared to become the reader of the other. The understanding of the decorative program that emerges from the interposition of the poetic guide in this specific setting, I would further propose, is suggestive not only for the reading of architectural decoration throughout the Alhambra, but also for illuminating the function of poetic inscriptions, where they appear, on other objects and monuments in the medieval Muslim world.[21]

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I. ARCHITECTURAL AND POETIC CONTEXTS

In addition to the explicit reference to the figures of *badīʿ* poetry in Ibn al-Jayyab's verse, the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I helps to elucidate the role of the inscriptions in understanding the Alhambra due to the following considerations: the state of preservation of the tower's original decoration; the fact that the poems were composed for this particular site; and, finally, the simple matter that it remains one of the least studied areas of the Alhambra.[22] Constructed under the patronage of the Nasrid sultan Yusuf I sometime before 1349,[23] the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is embedded in the curtain wall on the north side of the Alhambra enclosure (fig. 2). Flanked by the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII (also known as the *Torre de las Infantas*) (fig. 3) to the east and the *Torre de Cadi* to the west, it forms part of the defensive system of the Alhambra's *madīna*, which includes these and other towers and gates, and a curtain wall that links these structures. The curtain wall (figs. 2–4), with a sentry walk along the top as well as a vaulted passageway below the ground level of the tower within the wall itself, presents a system of communication, not only among all the defensive structures of the enclosure, but also between them and the *madīna*.[24] The tower's rooftop terrace, reached by an interior staircase, allows unobstructed observation of the terrain on the north, east, and west sides, including the pathways that link the escarpments of the Generalife and the Alhambra, and thus contributes to the defense of the enclosure.

The exterior appearance of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* (fig. 2) is not dissimilar to that of other towers in the Alhambra. Its projection is that of a massive defensive bastion with solid walls, except for a double-light window piercing each of the west, north, and east walls high in its elevation. The plan (fig. 5) is rectangular and mea-

Fig. 2. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, exterior with the curtain wall, looking west. (Photo: Olga Bush)

Fig. 3. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII, exterior with the curtain wall, looking east. (Photo: Olga Bush)

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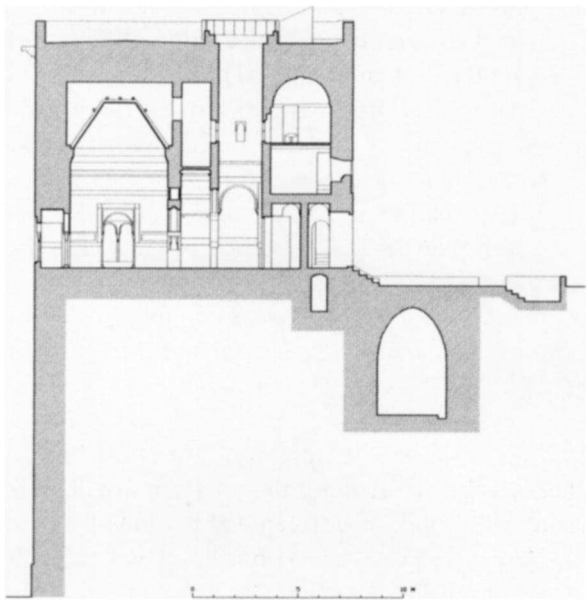

Fig. 4. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, longitudinal section. (After Antonio Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios nazaríes, siglos XIII–XV* [Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1995], 131, used with the author's permission)

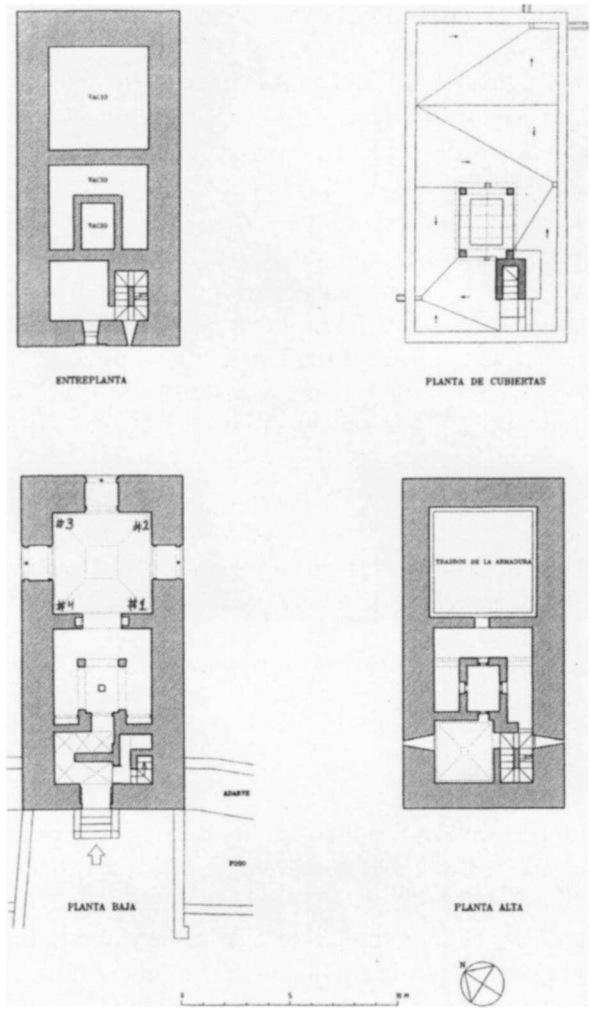

Fig. 5. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, plan. The location of the inscriptions of Ibn al-Jayyab's poems is indicated by number on the plan of the ground floor at the lower left. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 130, used with the author's permission)

sures 15.14 meters by 7.5 meters.[25] The volume of the tower is divided, as it were, into three connected parts: the entrance, with a room above it on the second and third floors; a small patio, which was originally open to the sky, but is now covered with a glass lantern; and the principal room, whose elevation extends nearly the entire height of the tower (figs. 4 and 5). The *bāshūra* (bent entrance corridor), a defensive feature characteristic of Nasrid buildings, leads from the entryway, situated on the south side, to the small interior patio, which is square in plan. The pilasters on the entrance side of the patio and the square piers on the opposite side (fig. 6) support the structure of the lantern that crowns the patio, serving as its source of light. The principal room in the interior of the *Qalahurra* (figs. 7 and 8) is reached through an archway from the small patio. Square in plan, it has a central niche cut within its thick walls on three sides; each niche (fig. 10) is open to the exterior by a window with twin lights. The plan of the principal room belongs to the typology of the *qubba*,[26] a room covered by a vault or a cupola. It shares many architectural and decorative features with the Hall of the Comares, the most outstanding example of this type in the Alhambra, which, like the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, was constructed under the patronage of Yusuf I.

The tower suffered mutilations, especially during the French occupation from 1808 to 1812, during which time the wooden doors and the ceiling in the principal room were destroyed.[27] It appears that the first restoration and conservation works were begun as early as 1814 and they have continued intermittently since then.

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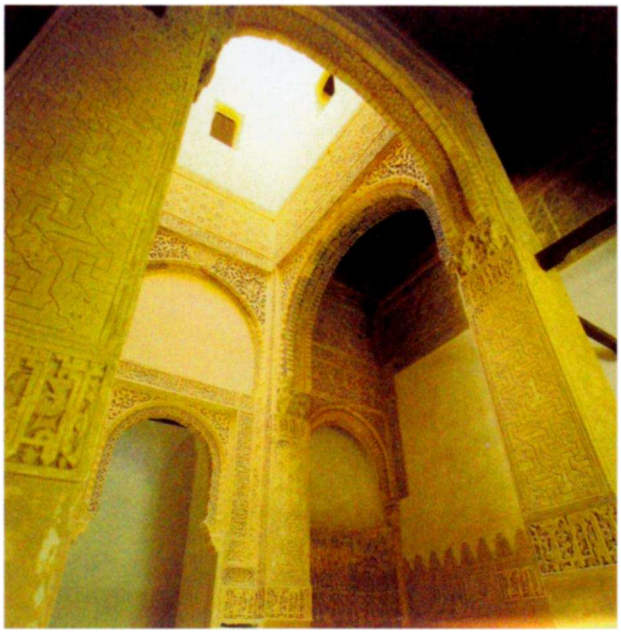

Fig. 6. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior patio. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 132 fig. 69) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

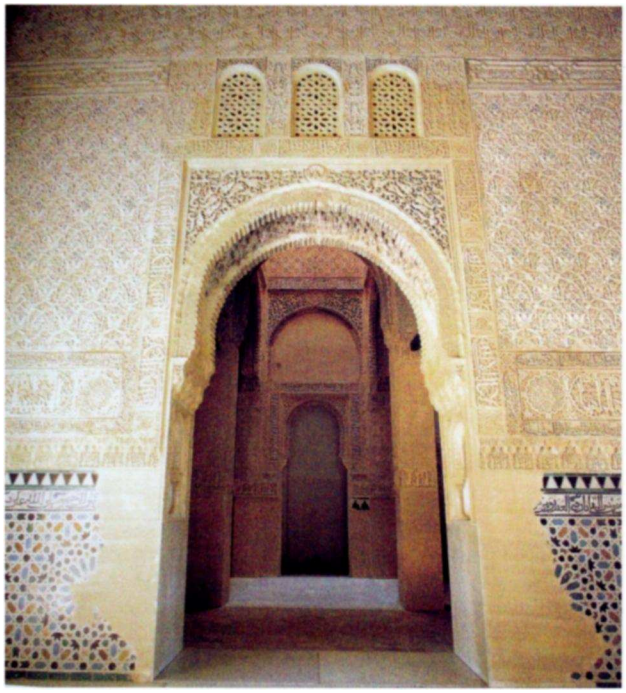

Fig. 7. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior of the *qubba*, south side. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 133 fig. 70) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

The present-day wooden ceiling dates to the period between 1878 and 1892; several panels in the dadoes of the ceramic tile, and the marble floor, belong to later periods.[28] Despite the vicissitudes of time and human intervention, the decoration of the interior of the principal room has in general been preserved in its original state. The stucco decoration in the interior patio of the *Qalahurra* (fig. 6) sustained considerable loss on the piers, but has otherwise been mostly preserved.[29]

Parietal epigraphy constitutes part of the decoration of the interior spaces of the *Qalahurra*. While it appears that only formulaic inscriptions seen in many other precincts in the Alhambra were employed in the patio, both formulaic inscriptions and Qur'anic verses (Sura 112, *al-Ikhlāṣ* [Oneness], and Sura 113, *al-Falaq* [Daybreak]) were inscribed in the principal hall.[30] It should be noted that the Qur'anic verses inscribed in the ceramic dadoes are only partially preserved. Four poems composed by Ibn al-Jayyab form the third type of parietal epigraphy found in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. Inscribed in the interior of the principal room,[31] each poem occupies a rectangular ornate inscription band (*ṭirāz*) on two adjoining walls (fig. 11), and frames two large cartouches with Kufic epigraphy, which in turn alternate with circular polylobed cartouches filled with foliate motifs. The poetic epigraphy forms part of the carved stucco decoration and is situated on the walls above the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaics. The verses, executed in cursive Maghribi style, are vocalized.

The key to my reading of the parietal epigraphy as an interrelated ensemble is the passage mentioned at the outset of my discussion, which appears in poem 3, verse 6.[32] Although throughout my analysis I will refer, when appropriate, to all four poems,[33] I will focus my discussion primarily on the text of this poem, which reads:

1. This monument (*maṣnaʿ*) embellishes the Alhambra,
   It is the abode of the peaceful person and of the warrior.

2. *Qalahurra* was set as a palace (*qaṣr)*
   So, say: it is a stronghold or a gathering place for happiness.

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3. The beauty (*bahā'*) of the palace (*qaṣr*) is distributed between its four directions (*jihāt*), the sky (*samā'*), and the earth (*arḍ*).[34]

4. Marvels of stucco and tiles
[it] holds, but the carpentry of its ceiling is even more marvelous.

5. In storing so much treasure it triumphed
in going up and in rising to the highest heights.

6. It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badīʿ* poetry: paronomasias, antithesis, caesuras, and *muraṣṣaʿ* (*mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, *mughaṣṣan*, *muraṣṣaʿ*).[35]

7. If Yusuf is there, his face is a marvel
that accumulates all enchantments.

8. The main glory [comes] from Khazraj, whose traces
in the religion are the thunder with light that spreads.

As noted at the outset of my discussion, in verse 6 Ibn al-Jayyab names the specific tradition of *badīʿ* poetry, as well as four of its principal poetic figures. The first three are *mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, and *mughaṣṣan*, which may be rendered as paronomasia, antithesis, and caesura, respectively. The fourth term, *muraṣṣaʿ*, will require a more extended gloss than the simple identification of a common analogue; I will return to this matter below. *Badīʿ* poetry employs other figures, among which both its medieval and modern theoreticians generally consider *istiʿāra* (metaphor) the most important.[36] And metaphor is also much in evidence in these four poems of Ibn al-Jayyab, as, for example, in his allocation of beauty to the four directions, the earth, and the sky (3.3), which, given the architectural context, appear as metaphors for walls, floor, and ceiling, whose collective figurative force is to liken the palace (*al-qaṣr*) to the world, and so expand its significance. Nevertheless, I will restrict my discussion to the four poetic terms explicitly enumerated by Ibn al-Jayyab, arguing that their inscription in the very site of the architectural decoration provides a guide to the perception of the *Qalahurra*'s visual elements.

The use of the term *badīʿ*, the literal meaning of which is "new, creative, beautiful," and the insertion of the four poetic figures into the verse make an explicit reference to a tradition of classical Arabic poetry. The *badīʿ* poetry that fully emerged at the end of the ninth century at the Abbasid court was considered innovative at that time. *Badīʿ* was exemplified in the works of such Abbasid poets as Abu Nuwas (d. ca. 815), Abu Tammam (d. 845 or 846), and Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 908), among others. The new poetry was examined for the first time by Ibn al-Muʿtazz in his *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*, a work that became the model for theoretical writing about poetry.[37] He proposed that *badīʿ* poetry was not entirely new, but rather its innovations were a matter of degree.[38] Ibn al-Muʿtazz analyzed five rhetorical figures of speech employed in *badīʿ* poetry: *istiʿāra* (metaphor), *tajnīs* (paronomasia), *ṭibāq* (antithesis), *radd aʿjāz al-kalām ʿalā ṣudūrih* (internal repetition), and *al-madhhab al-kalāmī* ("dialectical" manner).[39] His analysis suggests that the interrelationship of these five rhetorical elements formed the structure of a *badīʿ* poem, which, in Kamal Abu Deeb's words, can be understood as "a system within which the elements are not isolated but interrelated"; moreover,

> ...the basic property of the structure is that it is formed on the level of the code, rather than the message of discourse; it explores relations of opposition and similarity, of oneness and multiplicity, between the linguistic constituents of poetry.[40]

In addition to the complex interrelationship of different linguistic elements in the structure of a poem, the question of what constituted a poem's ultimate beauty occupied poets and literary critics of the period as well, informed primarily by Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. Thus, according to Ibn Tabataba (d. 934), the ultimate beauty of a poem depends on *iʿtidāl*, or "well-formedness and harmony."[41]

In sum, defined and judged by these criteria, an innovative *badīʿ* poetry not only took hold at the Abbasid court but transformed the medieval poetry of all Muslim lands, including al-Andalus.[42] From the tenth century onward, Andalusian poets composed *badīʿ* poetry.[43] Ibn al-Khatib included poems of the most accomplished practitioners of *badīʿ* poetry—Abu Nuwas, Abu al-ʿAtahiya, Ibn al-Rumi, and Ibn al-Muʿtazz—in *al-Siḥr wa 'l-shiʿr*, the poetic anthology mentioned above, which was to serve as "a guide to good poetry and literary taste." It has been noted that Ibn al-Khatib's own poetry in traditional genres betrays dependence on the poetic works of Abu Nuwas, Abu Tammam, and al-Mutanabbi.[44] In short, his work as compiler and poet

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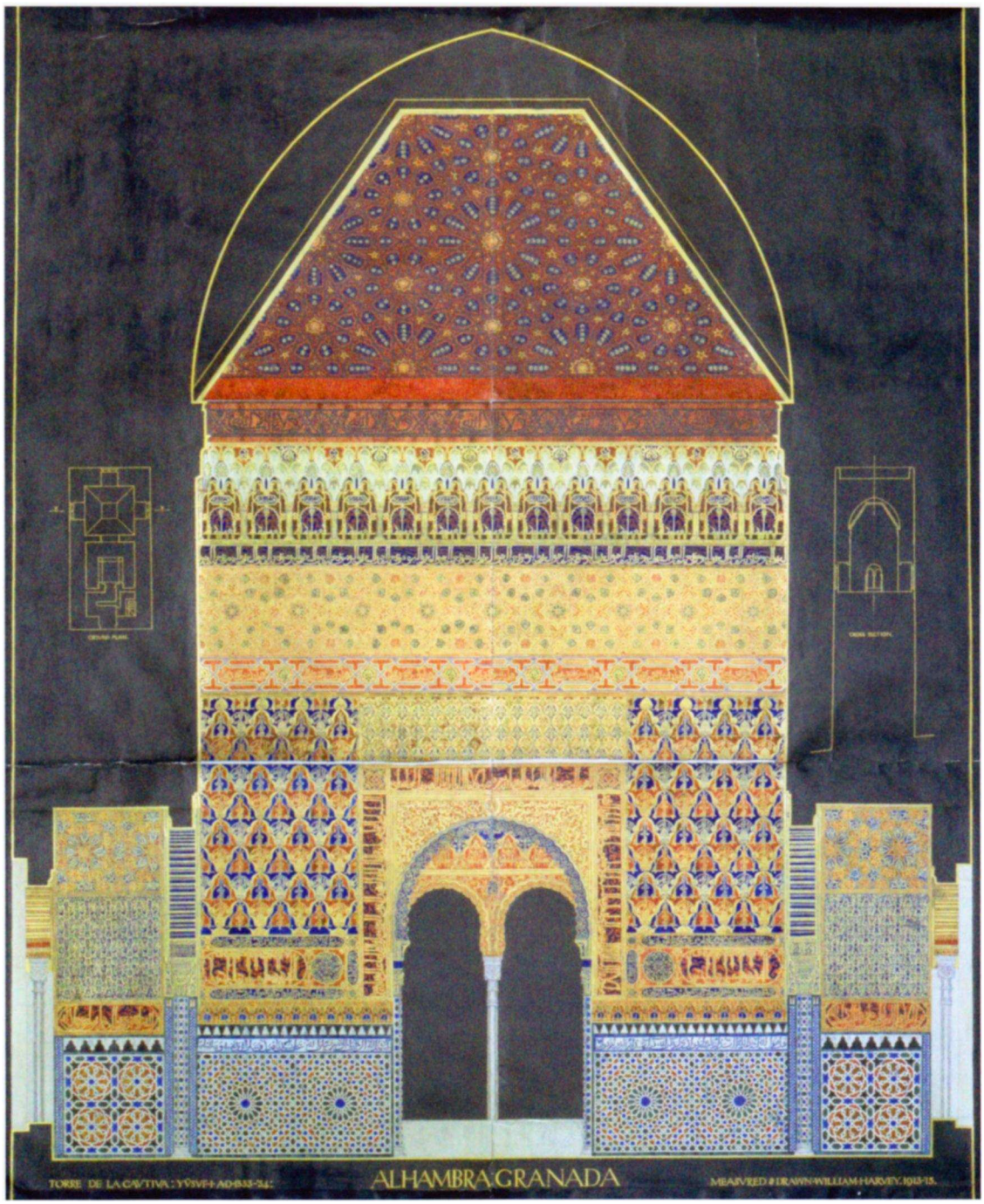

Fig. 8. William Harvey, drawing of the interior elevation of the "Tower of the Captive" (*al-Qalahurra al-jadīda*) of Yusuf I, the Alhambra. Pen and ink, india ink, watercolor, and pencil. Victoria and Albert Museum, no. E.1274-1963. (Photo: courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum)

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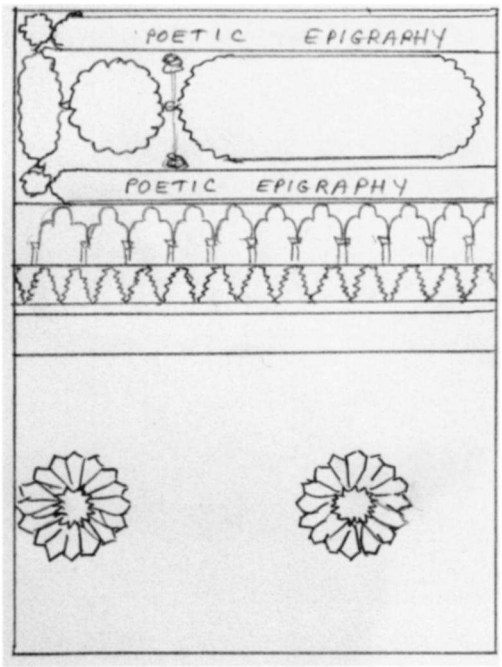

Fig. 9a. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #1. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

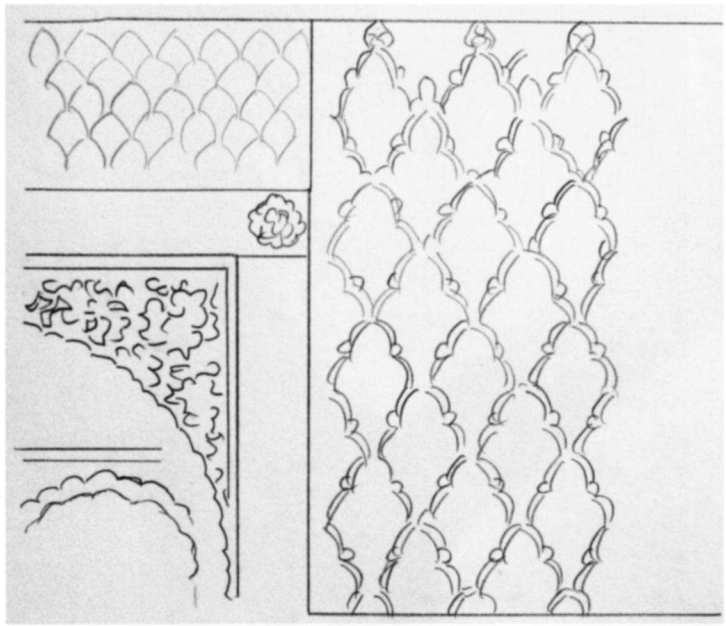

Fig. 9b. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #2. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

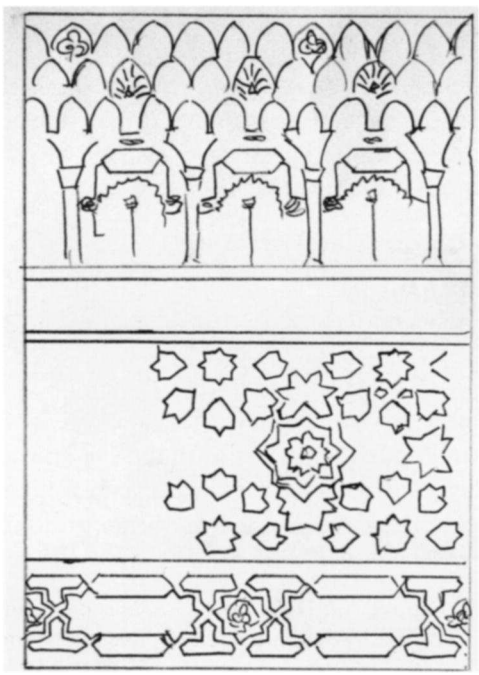

Fig. 9c. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #3. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

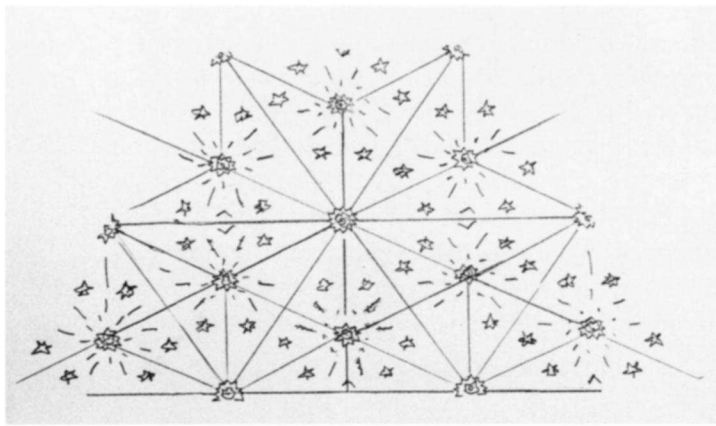

Fig. 9d. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #4. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

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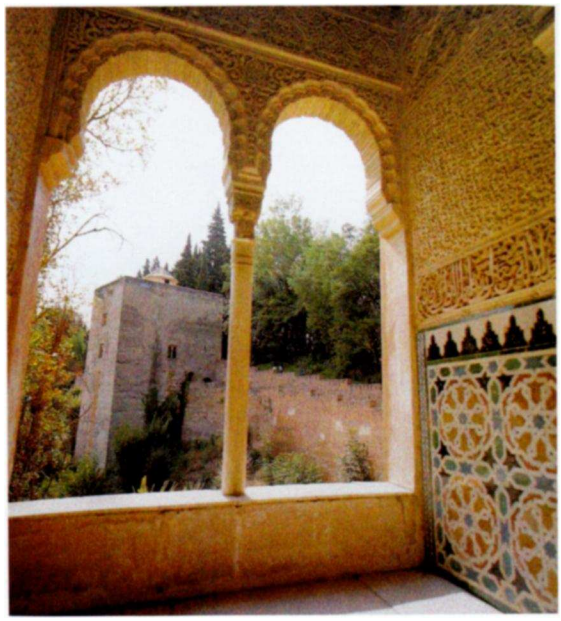

Fig. 10. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior, niche on the west wall with a view of the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 134, fig. 71) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

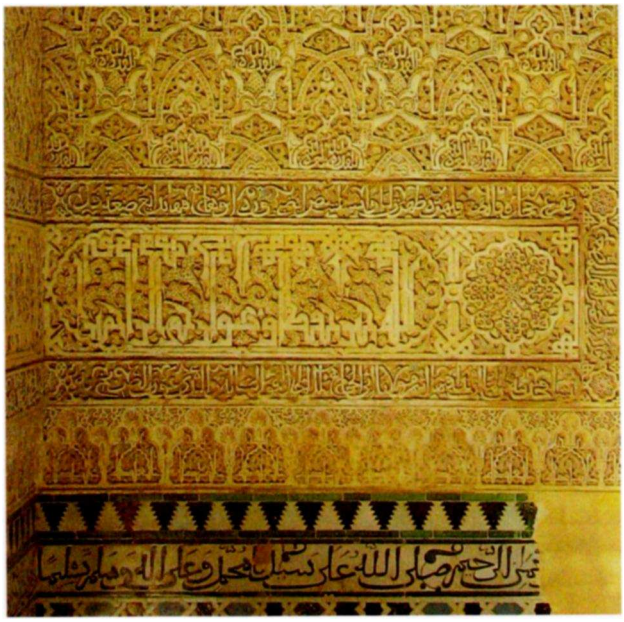

Fig. 11. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, interior, partial view of Ibn al-Jayyab's poem, inscribed in the rectangular frame around the large cartouche. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 135, fig. 74) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

attests to the continuity in the understanding and interpretation of the terms of figuration of *badīʿ* poetry under the Nasrids. Indeed, this poetic tradition culminated in the Nasrid period in the writing of the court poets Ibn al-Jayyab and Ibn Zamrak (1333–93), in addition to Ibn al-Khatib himself, all three of whom composed poems inscribed on the walls of the Alhambra.[45] The examination of Ibn al-Jayyab's poetic program in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* serves as further evidence of this trajectory.

II. THE MEDIATING ROLE OF POETRY

In light of Abu Deeb's explication, where the code (roughly, structural properties and figurative functions), rather than the message (i.e., the contents), constitutes the aim of poetic composition and thus the principal touchstone for judgment, García Gómez's dismissal of Ibn al-Jayyab's four poems in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* as a mere redundant "variation on the same theme" must be contested.[46] This is necessary not least because, in line with García Gómez's view, virtually the whole decoration of the Alhambra, and not only its poetic epigraphy, would then be judged inferior. Against such a conclusion, one may cite Grabar's positive assessment of the "conservatism" of the Alhambra:

> Even if at times repetitive and obvious, the forms of the Alhambra are perfect in the sense that each of them is developed and used with a full awareness of its possibilities and with visual clarity and logic in spite of their complexity.[47]

Hence, in contrast to García Gómez's disparagement of redundancy in the parietal epigraphy of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, other scholars of Arabic poetry, such as Julie Scott Meisami, have emphasized that *takrār* (repetition) is a characteristic feature on various levels of the poetic code, serving, for instance, as "a structural device, whose function is to unify the segments of a poem."[48] Thus, in an analysis of a *qaṣīda* by Ibn Zamrak, a portion of which was inscribed in the Hall of the Two Sisters in the Alhambra, James T. Monroe argues against the view of

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the repeated use of an image as a sign of "metaphoric impoverishment."[49] While García Gómez's vital contribution to the study of the poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra is unquestionable, here he has imported a modern European expectation of a certain form of originality into his analysis.

The issue, then, is to seek to understand the aesthetic goal that Ibn al-Jayyab thought to articulate by means of the governing poetics of the *badīʿ* tradition, which he explicitly invoked in the third poem. It is evident from the first glance at the parietal epigraphy in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* that the poems' contents are very similar; in each case, the verses communicate much the same message, glorifying the building and its patron (see Appendix II). But the glory of the poetry itself resides rather in its figurative variety, which, in "the dialectical manner," depends upon a similarity or "oneness" against which opposition and multiplicity may be perceived. Thematic repetition serves here above all, I suggest, to underline that the poems work as a unified ensemble made visible around the perimeter of the room, a system of interrelated poetic figures whose purpose is to guide the reading of—rather than merely describe—the decorative program.

The poems are short, each composed of eight verses that are divided into three parts: the beginning, in which the theme is enunciated in general terms; the middle, in which the theme is developed; and an ending, which presents a *fakhr* (glorification) of the patron.[50] The first verse of poems 1, 3, and 4 states that the text is about a *burj* (tower), and places it immediately in the context of, and in relationship to, the Alhambra. The Alhambra is "proud" of it, "like [of] a crown" (1.1); it "embellishes" the Alhambra (3.1); and it "honors" the Alhambra (4.1). Moreover, the opening verse of the remaining poem (2.1) extends the context beyond the palatial city, proclaiming that the "monument's" (*al-maṣnaʿ*) "fame spread through every land." The middle part of each poem—verses two through five—supplies the works with the imagery of the building, while the concluding *fakhr*s glorify the sultan Yusuf I. These poems are characterized by a linear movement from a general and metaphorical statement to detailed descriptive images.[51] The abundant *waṣf* (poetic descriptions) of the carved stucco panels (3.4, 4.3), the dadoes of the mosaic tiles (1.4, 3.4), the cupola of the *artesonado* ceiling (2.5, 3.3), and the floor (1.4, 3.3) draw attention to the lavish embellishment of the tower, placing emphasis on the variety of techniques, materials, and designs.

A transitional link between the middle part and the ending *fakhr* is carefully crafted by the poet in verse 6 of poems 1, 2, and 4, in which the image of the tower developed in the preceding verses, and that of the sultan, to be elaborated in the conclusion, are evoked in the same verse: "Dressed in a *ṭirāz* of glory, as in them [the walls] appears / the name of Our Lord (*mawlānā*) Abu'l-Haj-jaj" (1.6); "It [the tower] reveals Yusuf to us, his face / like the sun that a night can never hide" (2.6); and "A marvelous edifice was made to manifest [itself] by wisdom / that which only the caliph Yusuf achieved" (4.6). As has already been noted, the corresponding verse in the remaining poem (3.6) makes an allusion of a different kind: "It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badīʿ* poetry: paronomasias, antithesis, caesuras and *muraṣṣaʿ*."

I emphasize the structural analogy. The crucial verse enumerating the tropes of *badīʿ* poetry fills the place and the function of transition otherwise supplied by the juxtaposition of tower and sultan. This structural position, I propose, presents poetry itself—or concretely, the four poems inscribed in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*—as the mediator articulating the figurative relationship between architecture and ruler. For, as scholars of the Alhambra all agree, despite the great variety in their approaches, the architecture represents the sultan, which is to say that beauty (*bahāʾ*) represents power.[52] The poetry speaks for the manner in which this representation is realized. To do so, poetry gives voice to the forms of interrelationship between visual elements that constitute the beauty of the architectural decoration. An analysis of the poetic inscriptions, therefore, can provide a foundation for understanding the parietal decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. Most broadly, I emphasize that poetry and architectural decoration shared principles of figuration and thus that a coherent aesthetics crosses the boundaries between artistic media in the Alhambra.[53]

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III. FIGURATIVE SYSTEM AND DECORATIVE DISPLAY

García Gómez made an attempt to interpret Ibn al-Jayyab's list of poetic figures as a guide to the decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. For instance, he understood the term *mujannas* to mean "similarity,"[54] supported by the meanings of the verb (root *j-n-s*) in its second and third forms, which respectively correspond to "to make alike, make similar" and "to be alike, similar, related." And in fact, the numerous decorative forms employed in the embellishment of this space support this understanding, since there are certainly similarities between features. Such a conception of *mujannas*, however, bespeaks García Gómez's mimetic bias, reinforced in his interpretation of *mughaṣṣan* as "branching,"[55] on the basis of the meaning of its root (*gh-ṣ-n*), Forms II and IV of which have the meaning "to put forth branches, to branch (tree)." Thus, García Gómez understood *mughaṣṣan* to refer mimetically to the vegetal decoration, whose leaves and tendrils sprout and branch out to fill the space.[56] The design does not, however, isolate the foliate motifs. Quite the contrary, they appear within an area (figs. 8 and 9b), which, as Fernández-Puertas has demonstrated, consists of a pattern built of no less than three superimposed rhomboid grids—one geometric, one floral, and one epigraphic.[57] In short, the foliate "branching" is inextricably interrelated with the other motifs. What is wanted, then, is an enlarged view of figuration beyond the "similarity" of mimesis that can account for more varied and complex interrelations.

I prefer to speak of "relatedness" as the overarching trope of all the terms of *badīʿ* poetics enumerated by Ibn al-Jayyab, and of all the types of motifs in the architectural decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. In this sense, the figurative system shared by poetry and architectural decoration participates in the larger scheme, one of the major components of which is the geometric "relatedness" of the Alhambra elucidated by Fernández-Puertas, who has demonstrated that all the architectural features of the palatial complex are interrelated through their dependence upon a single geometric proportion—that of the diagonal of a square to its side, or the square root of 2.[58] I, in turn, seek to demonstrate the ways in which poetry provides a common language for the varied figurative relations between visual elements.

Sophie Makariou's interdisciplinary approach to the inscriptions in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* proves more illuminating for my analysis.[59] Makariou, too, considers the poems to be of limited literary quality in themselves, but finds nonetheless that "one is faced there with a compositional process that links the thing written tightly to the thing seen or to be read."[60] She focuses her attention on the visual disposition of the inscriptions. Her analyses are altogether persuasive, but the figurative system that she finds exemplified in the layout of the text must be extended to the experience of the parietal decoration as a whole. In this last respect, I note one discrepancy between our conceptions of the "compositional process." Makariou likens the disposition of the parietal epigraphy to a manuscript.[61] She is careful to circumscribe her own simile ("comme dans un manuscrit") in a note in which she indicates that her research did not uncover any "convincing comparison" between the format of any extant contemporaneous manuscript and the disposition of the parietal epigraphy.[62] Yet she continues to assess the parietal decoration against the standard of manuscript design, arguing that "the main field is not that of the essential inscription—the poem—and that the layout constitutes rather a sort of testing or deception of that which is given to be read."[63] In short, the rest of the decoration dominates over the poetic inscriptions, and Makariou takes this to be an upending of the hierarchy expected of a manuscript, in which the poem would be "essential," and the non-linguistic motifs secondary. There is no reason, however, to expect that inscriptions in an architectural setting would share the same hierarchy. Makariou is more to the point when she adds in passing, "In effect the poem appears in marginal inscriptions, which, in the hierarchy of the page, would occupy the place, if one may extend the comparison with books, of glosses."[64] Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi expresses a similar view in her semiotic analysis, arguing that the Alhambra is to be seen as "text" and its parietal epigraphy as "commentary" on the "text."[65] My reading of the poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra is consonant with this view, though I would exercise some caution, since the "glosses" or "commentary" are not extraneous additions to the "essential" architectural text. The poetic inscriptions are in fact an integral part of the "text" itself.

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Rather than offer a full description of that "text," that is, a detailed visual analysis of the *Qalahurra*'s complex parietal decoration, I emphasize here its main organizing feature: the division of the elevation of the interior (fig. 8) into four major horizontal areas, each increasing in height in relation to the preceding one, and consisting of a number of distinct decorative bands. The main import of Ibn al-Jayyab's reference to *badīʿ* poetics in the epigraphy concerns the ways in which the four figures articulate the interrelationships between those horizontal areas. I will expand on the visual analysis of particular decorative elements while elucidating the poetic figures.

Ibn al-Jayyab's four poems are inscribed in the first, that is, the lowest, horizontal area, which, in the context of my present argument, calls for a fuller description. This area (figs. 8 and 9a) combines two materials: ceramic mosaic and plaster. The lower part of the wall is occupied by dadoes of ceramic mosaic tiles divided into three bands: a wide strip of geometric designs based on a motif of radiating stars;[66] a narrow epigraphic band above it;[67] and crowning the latter, a similarly narrow band with a crenellation element. Four different geometric designs can be distinguished in the dadoes: the first two are based on the eight-pointed star, while the third and fourth each have a sixteen-pointed star as the central element. They are distributed around the perimeter of the room in the following manner (figs. 5, 7, and 8): the dadoes with the first design are located on the walls of the central niche; those with the second design appear in the lateral niches; the dadoes on the walls between the three niches are embellished with the third design; and the dadoes on the walls between the lateral niches and the entrance are decorated with the fourth design.[68] Here, in addition to white, green, blue, and brown in the polychromed color scheme of the ceramic tiles, luster tiles with sulfates of copper and silver appear for the first time in the decoration of the Alhambra.[69]

Between the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaic and the main expanse of the wall formed by panels of carved plaster there are two horizontal bands.[70] The first of the bands is filled with a *muqarnas* frieze supported by miniscule columns. The next contains polylobed cartouches—large ovals filled with epigraphy alternating with smaller circles filled with foliate forms—enclosed by a rectangular frame inscribed with Ibn al-Jayyab's verses (fig. 11). The poetic text in this band starts on one wall and continues to the adjoining wall, linking two sides of a corner, as though the verses were providing structural support for the *qubba* as a whole.

The second area (figs. 8 and 9b) is filled with the three superimposed rhomboid grids (geometric, floral, and epigraphic) mentioned above.[71] Although only the floral grid is easily detectible, the superimposition of three different grids, all placed on the same vertical axis, produces the effect of a pattern densely filled with mixtilinear, floral, and epigraphic elements. The epigraphic grid deserves special attention. Fernández-Puertas has discerned that Kufic calligraphy was employed here and that all of the letters are executed in a proportional script. The letters *alif* and *lām* are extended to form adjoining intersecting arches at the apex of the grid, while their prolongations are knotted at its base.[72] The Kufic phrase, which reads, "*al-mulku li-llāhi*" (Dominion [belongs] to God), alternates with another inscription placed within the adjoining arch of the same grid and executed in *naskh-thuluth* script: "*al-qudratu li-llāhi*" (Power [belongs] to God). A second *naskh-thuluth* inscription with the invocation, "*al-ʿizzatu li-llāhi*" (Glory [belongs] to God), is placed at the base of the floral grid.[73]

Just as in the first area, this level of decoration extends onto the adjoining walls, creating the effect of a continuous band around the perimeter of the room. This effect is counterbalanced by the interruptions of the apertures: the entrance arch and the three openings with screens of carved and pierced plaster above it on the south wall (figs. 5 and 7);[74] and the deep, linteled niche on the three other walls (figs. 5 and 8). The vertical thrust of the apertures is emphasized architectonically by the single slender column of the double-light window, and decoratively by the rectangular frame or *alfiz,* which articulates the openings of the niches and which contains an epigraphic band. The contrast of vertical and horizontal directions in the decoration is made even more emphatic in the small panels placed directly above the *alfiz.* These panels constitute an area that mimics, on a diminutive scale, the rhomboid grid that flanks it on either side. Thus, this area further empha-

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sizes the articulation of the niche and of the double-light window within it—just as the latticed windows do on the south side—and consequently it makes the vertical ascent of the panels with the large rhomboid grid more prominent.

The third area (figs. 8 and 9c) is divided into four bands of various widths. The geometry of the first band is articulated through an alternation of eight-pointed stars and epigraphic cartouches, whose lateral sides repeat the profile of the stars. The second band is also dominated by the eight-pointed stars, the interstices of which are filled with polygonal geometric shapes and further embellished with floral elements. Above it is an epigraphic band, surmounted by the wide band of a *muqarnas* frieze supported by a colonnade.

Finally, the fourth area (figs. 8 and 9d) is the wooden cupola of the *artesonado* ceiling, embellished with rows of radiating stars.[75] An epigraphic band carved in wood crowns the parietal elevation and serves as a transition to the cupola. The band contains the Nasrid motto, "*walā ghālib illā Allāh*" (There is no conqueror, but God), which is inscribed repeatedly throughout the precincts of the Alhambra.

Some decorative features are common to the first three areas. In the plaster panels of parietal decoration, the superimposed grids and their constituent elements were carved at different depths, varying from 0.5 centimeters to 4 centimeters.[76] Hence, the great variety of decorative forms, carved at several levels of relief, gives the appearance of intersecting and overlapping each other. The complexity of the design, combined with the carving method, resulted in the intended optical effect of a three-dimensional texture. This texture was enriched even more by the treatment of the surface of the foliate motifs that fill the grids in different ways: some are left flat or plain, while others are ribbed, dentated, serrated, lenticular, and beveled.[77] In a panel containing an epigraphic cartouche (fig. 11), for instance, several depths of carving can be distinguished: the letters of the inscriptions form the foreground, while the vegetal motifs, carved in lower relief, constitute the middle ground.

The use of colored pigments contributed further to this effect. Although throughout the precincts of the Alhambra the carved and molded plaster panels have lost their original polychrome painting, the remains of pigments in many places provide evidence of the rich and vibrant palette that was used in the decoration. The traces of pigments show that most of the parietal epigraphy was painted with gold or silverleaf, or in white with black outlines.[78] Executed in these colors, the inscriptions "stood out" on a red, blue, or turquoise ground.[79] Foliate elements in some compositions were also painted with gold or silver leaf, while in others their serrated edges were painted either in red or blue in contrast with the ground color.[80] In a historical account describing a *qubba* in the Alhambra, Ibn al-Khatib stated that the poetic epigraphy was executed in letters of "pure gold" on a ground of lapis lazuli.[81] And speaking of the parietal decoration in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, Ibn al-Jayyab, in a poem inscribed on its wall, says that the designs are *muzakhraf* (polychromed) and *mudhahhab* (gilded) (4.5). The juxtaposition of primary colors red, blue, and gold (a brilliant and costly substitute for yellow) appears to have predominated in the color scheme of the carved plaster panels in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, where the red and blue grounds alternate within the rows of the rhomboid grid, as does the color of the *naskh-thuluth* inscriptions within it.[82]

The embellishment of the interior of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is but one example of a unified and clearly articulated aesthetic approach to decoration in the palaces of the Alhambra. Various facets of this approach are employed consistently throughout the interiors of all palatial precincts: the division of the wall plane along its elevation into successive horizontal areas, in which a specific decorative element (geometry, foliation, or epigraphy) predominates; the superimposition of decorative grids, carved at various depths; the employment of similar embellishments in distinct areas of the decoration, which further enhances visual unity and coherence in the compositional scheme as a whole; the application of pigments in a color scheme with respect to fore- and background motifs; the use of decorative materials along the elevation (dadoes of ceramic tile mosaics, carved stucco, wood *artesonado*s, or molded plaster *muqarnas* vaults); and, finally, the use of all three types of parietal epigraphy—Qur'anic, formulaic, and poetic.

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IV. DEPLOYING THE FIGURES, READING THE DECORATION

I begin the concrete analysis of the relationship between Ibn al-Jayyab's deployment of the four poetic tropes and the architectural decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* with the figure of *muraṣṣaʿ* (or *tarṣīʿ*), which, in terms of poetic composition, is understood as internal rhyme.[83] Two types of *tarṣīʿ* have been defined: first, "when the words in each segment are completely equivalent in metre and rhyme" and second, "when one word in the first member differs from the corresponding one in the second."[84] The poems under examination are written in the same meter, *kāmil*, but in different rhymes: (1) ——*ājī*; (2) ——*ashā*; (3) ——*ʿu*; (4) ——*fu*. The first verse in all four poems has rhyming hemistiches; thereafter, however, a single rhyme occurs at the end of every verse.[85]

The popularity of *tarṣīʿ* has been attributed to "its potential for enhancing both the musicality of the poem and its affective impact on the audience";[86] it is thus related to the performative aspect of poetry. As Meisami noted, however, the term is derived from an expression related to the jeweler's craft—*tarṣīʿ al-ʿiqd*, or the setting of stones in a necklace in a corresponding or symmetrical manner, according to Ibn al-Athir (d. 1239), a literary theorist and critic at the Zangid court in Mosul.[87] Other scholars have identified *tarṣīʿ* with "inlay," recalling that the Arabic word is the etymological root of Spanish *taracea* and Italian *intarsio*.[88] This understanding of inlay, or "the inserting of one part within another,"[89] would correspond to the structure of internal rhyme, that is, the insertion of a rhyme within a verse (at the close of the first hemistich), in addition to the end rhyme.[90]

Given the association of the term *tarṣīʿ* with the craft of jewelry, García Gómez admitted that the meaning "inlaid," which he had proposed as the basis for the relation between Ibn al-Jayyab's verses and the parietal decoration of carved plaster, was problematic.[91] This difficulty might have been better resolved had he considered all of the decorative media, in which case the term in its literal understanding might be seen to apply more adequately to the description of the revetments of ceramic tile mosaic. The latter technique is similar to inlay, and, the poet admires it in the same verse in poem 3 in which he also refers to carved plaster: "Marvels of stucco and tiles..." (3.4). Yet a more complete understanding of *muraṣṣaʿ* may be gained by recognizing that poetry, too, is among the decorative media of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, and that it, too, is inlaid in the decoration.

Hence, reading the term as it was defined and employed in *badīʿ* poetics will shed light on its relevance to the discussion of decoration, suggesting a more plausible explanation for its use by Ibn al-Jayyab. Examining the theoretical writing on poetry of the Abbasid literary critic and poet Qudama b. Jaʿfar (d. 948), Abu Deeb has proposed that the term *tarṣīʿ* signified "both morphological and metrical harmony and internal rhyming [that] can occur in single words or in phrases," and that this poetic feature, acting as "a structural property," belongs to "the level of organization and symmetry of a poem."[92] Neither the term itself nor Qudama's understanding or interpretation of it was new at the time, since the Abbasid writer insisted that ancient and modern poets alike strove to attain this poetic goal.

Recalling the preeminent aspect of repetition in *tarṣīʿ*, the "morphological internal rhyming" of a poetic text would correspond to the visual repetition of elements and forms self-evident in the decorative bands of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. The combination of elements of three types of decorative vocabulary—geometric, epigraphic, and vegetal—serves as visual parallels to the linguistic morphemes that constitute the building blocks of a composition. What the understanding of *tarṣīʿ* in relation to *badīʿ* poetics allows me to emphasize here is that this form of "relatedness" operates as a structural property at "the level of organization and symmetry" of the decorative scheme as a whole.

The internal rhyming of *tarṣīʿ* is linked to the second poetic term named by Ibn al-Jayyab, *mughaṣṣan*, or caesura. As a poetic term, caesura refers to a compositional device that distributes the syllables of a verse more or less evenly into hemistiches; it thus functions as an "architectural" element dividing the entire structure of a poem into proportional units. Caesura not only highlights the quality of balance between the hemistiches, but also indicates a logical pause in the performance of a poem, thereby amplifying the hemistiches' rhetorical impact. The poet's praise for "the beauty of the palace" is articulated as just such a question of dis-

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tribution: "The beauty (*bahā'*) of the palace (*qaṣr*) is distributed between its four directions (*jihāt*), the sky (*samā'*), and the earth (*arḍ*)" (3.3). Caesura, which both isolates the hemistich and sets it in a symmetrical pair, is a paradigm for the "marvelous work" of the architectural space.

Balance and proportionate distribution, even the pause of caesura, so important for the performance of the poetic recital, are crucial to the analysis of the nonverbal decoration. The properties of caesura as a marker that divides the whole into parts are defined with still greater precision by Meisami when she notes that such markers in *badīʿ* poetics "indicate both connections and shifts."[93] As concerns the decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, I would suggest that Ibn al-Jayyab's reference to *mughaṣṣan* should be understood in this way, and, furthermore, I would point to the parietal epigraphy itself as the principal element performing the role of the visual caesura. For unlike the reception of the other decorative elements, in which the eye would take in abstract forms, whether floral or geometric, all but instantaneously, the reading of the epigraphy and the contemplation of its message would create an effective pause in the performance—here, the act of beholding. This would be especially true of the poetic inscriptions, situated somewhat below eye-level and thus perfectly accessible to a person seated on the floor.

The third poetic term named in Ibn al-Jayyab's poems is *muṭabbaq* (also *ṭibāq*), or antithesis. *Muṭabbaq* is formulated by "antithetical words, ideas, or constructs," which have a "potential for organizing larger units," such as verses, segments of a poem, and whole poems.[94] Considering the length of the poems, antithesis is employed abundantly, appearing in several verses in each poem. There are numerous examples of one-word antitheses, such as in the descriptions of the decoration, referring to motifs "single and paired" (1.3), and "sky (*samā'* [ceiling]) and earth (*arḍ* [floor])" (1.4 vs. 2.5; and 3.3), where an antithesis functions to underscore the division of a unified architectural and decorative composition into balanced parts.

Muṭabbaq can even be found at several reprises within a single verse, as in the first poem: "*Qalahurra* on the outside, while it conceals within a palace (*qaṣr*) that emits a burning light" (1.2). The antitheses of outside—within and conceals—emits are self-evident, but the more subtle opposition between the distinct architectural terms used establishes an architectural typology that provides the figurative key to the antithetical structure of the ensemble of four poems. Although it is generally accepted that the term *qalahurra* designates a military tower,[95] in Nasrid architecture it may refer to a large defensive tower that contains a royal dwelling within its interior.[96] This proposition is justified by the two standing examples in the Alhambra: the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* or new *Qalahurra*, as Ibn al-Jayyab called it, under study here, and the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII, built between 1393 and 1395, and designated by that term by the poet Ibn al-Zamrak.[97]

Ibn al-Jayyab introduced the building in the opening words of the first verse with the most generic of designations, "Of this tower (*burj*)" (1.1). The conjunction of *burj* and *qalahurra* (found also in the opening verses of poems 2 and 4) is more than a specification of the building type; rather, the division of *burj* into the twin images of *qalahurra* and *qaṣr* speaks to the antithetical nature of the tower itself. In the subsequent poems, Ibn al-Jayyab provides a further explication of the dual nature of the building by means of *muṭabbaq*: "*Qalahurra* was set as a palace (*qaṣr*) / So, say: it is a stronghold or a gathering place for happiness" (3.2), and "*Qalahurra* outwardly, on the inside a palace (*qaṣr*) / So, say: it is a stronghold or a dwelling for happy tidings" (4.2). What is notable in the poetic logic is that antithesis is not a choice between opposites, but rather a unity in contradiction. The *Qalahurra* can be the seat of pleasure and of pacific assembly precisely because it also projects military strength. The same antithesis is transferred from the architecture to express the dual nature of its royal patron: "This monument (*maṣnaʿ*)…abode of the peaceful person and of the warrior" (3.1). This *muṭabbaq* engages another antithesis that expresses the fundamental opposition between Islam and Christianity in 1.5, "It has been an honor to the faith that forced captive slaves built it [i.e., the *Qalahurra*]," since the "captive slaves" in question would have been Christians, who, it appears, took part in the royal construction projects of the Nasrids in Granada.[98] In this context, as elsewhere, the ruler stands for the faith, since it is both faith and ruler that defend against the infi-

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dels: "we are protected from everything that bewilders us" (2.7). The image of Yusuf I as protector is further elaborated in yet another antithesis: "If the kings compare their glories, / his [glory], the Qur'an itself tells us" (4.7). The vainglory of other kings is merely rivalry for earthly power and so circumscribed by history, whereas the true glory of the defender of the faith is sacred and inscribed in the Qur'an.

The logic of antithesis follows the more general principle of interrelationship. The special strength and glory of the sultan can only be known through his relationship to the infidel. Moreover, the repeated use of antithetical words, phrases, and concepts serves to organize and forge links between different poems. The primary link, central to all four poems, is the image of the *Qalahurra* itself, understood as an antithetical structure.

With respect to the decoration of the *Qalahurra*, *muṭabbaq* can be understood as "alternation," the meaning proposed by García Gómez.[99] For instance, the band in which circular and oblong cartouches alternate in the first (i.e., lowest) horizontal area is "related" to the band with alternating eight-pointed stars and cartouches in the third area. Not only do the lateral sides of the large cartouches in both bands repeat the profile of the smaller ones, but the large cartouches contain epigraphy, while the smaller ones are filled with floral elements. Furthermore, the rectilinear cartouches, which alternate with stars in the third area, are related to the small rectilinear cartouches, once again filled with inscriptions, that are suspended from the *muqarnas* frieze in the upper band of the same area. At the same time, the band above the *muqarnas* frieze in the fourth area, in which oblong cartouches alternate with circular ones with polylobed contours, relates back to the band in the first area with alternating cartouches: the knotted elements that link the cartouches in both bands clinch, as it were, the visual analogy.

The relationship of the two friezes of *muqarnas* supported by a colonnade in the first and third areas is primarily a matter of proportions; but in addition, the profile of the tiered-*muqarnas* configuration is reminiscent of the profile of the rhomboid grid in the second area, in the panels featuring both large- and small-scale grids. Finally, the epigraphy executed in *naskh* script in continuous bands and contained in the cartouches and present in all areas of decoration, and the short, knotted Kufic inscription repeated between the columns of the *muqarnas* frieze, visually link diverse decorative bands, functioning as the "seams" of the design.

I would suggest a further reading of *muṭabbaq* beyond the understanding of alternation with regard to the decoration of the *Qalahurra*. In addition to the sense of *ṭibāq* as "corresponding or analogous to something, consistent or compatible with something," in Form II, its root, *ṭ-b-q* spans a range of meanings: "to cover, to make coincident or congruent, to superpose (two figures in geometry); to spread throughout something, to pervade."[100] One finds analogy in the relation of the star design in the first, third, and fourth areas and the rhomboid grid in the second area, as both elements serve to make geometry explicit in the design. The analogical relation of the elements, as in the above example, allows at once the recognition and appreciation of similarities and dissimilarities between the decorative elements.[101]

The notion of superposition and congruency could not have been more evident than in the three superimposed grids that form the rhomboid patterning in the second horizontal area (fig. 9b). All three are congruent, since, despite being formed by rectilinear shapes in the primary, geometric grid, and by foliate and epigraphic elements in the other two, the foliate and epigraphic grids follow the outlines of the geometric one. Indeed, more than congruent, the grids quite literally pervade the panel and, moreover, cover one another. On a larger scale, this sense of *muṭabbaq* is evident with regard to the design within any panel, which spreads in horizontal and vertical directions, and for the decorative scheme as a whole, which covers the entire surface of the architectural interior.

The last of the four figures mentioned by Ibn al-Jayyab is *tajnīs* (also *jināS*, the terms are interchangeable, and both take their name from "the principle of relationship of kind or *mujānasa*"),[102] usually translated as paronomasia. Although there are several types of *tajnīs*, all of them depend "on the extent of the identity between the two terms that form the paronomasia."[103] The types can be defined as follows: terms derived from the same root, they

> may be two identical words with different meanings, one of which may be a combination of two words; they may contain identical letters, but differ in their vocalization and diacritics; they may be only partially identical verg-

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> ing on alliteration; and the two words may be identical except for a reversed sequence of their letters.[104]

Meisami emphasizes that the Arabic language "lends itself especially well to this device," and that it was therefore employed extensively in medieval Arabic poetry.[105] Ibn al-Jayyab was no exception, and his poems abound with *tajnīs*.

There are many examples in the poems of *tajnīs* based on etymology. In poem 3, for example, three verses employ a word with the root *j-m-ʿ*: in Form I (to collect, to combine, to accumulate, to gather, to compose), we have *majmaʿ* (assembly) (3.2), in reference to the *Qalahurra*'s palatial aspect as a place of gathering, and *jumiʿat* and *jamʿ* (storing so much treasure; literally, gathering, collecting, or combining in a collection) (3.5), which also refer to the tower; and finally, in Form V (to gather, to accumulate), we have *ajmaʿ* (3.7), in reference to the sultan's face, which "accumulates" enchantments.

The repetition of words gives rise to the suspicion that the poet intends a certain self-referential word play as a way to draw attention to his accomplishments, since he is in fact combining, accumulating, and gathering forms that derive from the root *j-m-ʿ*. In that light, one might well offer an alternative interpretation of verse 3.5, that is, to understand the verb *jumiʿat* to mean "to compose" poetry and the word *jamʿ* (treasure) to refer to poetic epigraphy. The poet's use of *tajnīs* indicates at once the dual nature of the treasures contained within the building—its visual and linguistic artistry—while at the same time it serves to praise his own compositions. This interpretation is reinforced by the subsequent verses of poem 3, in which Ibn al-Jayyab gathers or combines four tropes from *badīʿ* poetics.

In other instances, *tajnīs* is employed to link several poems together. A few brief examples will suffice to demonstrate this point. Words derived from the root *ṣ-n-ʿ* (work, workmanship, design, artistic skill) are of particular importance in creating the image of the tower in terms that praise the building's construction and embellishment. Thus, the root is used in two different verses of the first poem: *ṣanʿa* (workmanship) (1.3), and *ṣanāʾiʿī* (skillfully made) (1.4). It is employed in the second poem as *maṣnaʿ* (monument; literally, man-made structure, grand structure) (2.1), and as *ṣanʿ* (fabrication) (2.5); and finally, it is repeated as *maṣnaʿ* in the third poem (3.1). Similar employment of *tajnīs* linking several poems can be found with the root *f-kh-r*: *al-fakhr* (glory) (1.6, 3.8); and, in Form VIII, *iftakhara* (vying for glory), alongside *al-fakhr* (4.7).

I will end my discussion of this rhetorical figure with an example that is used to create ideological constructs in addition to a display of poetic skill. If antithesis constructed the poetic image of the sultan on the model of the *Qalahurra*, paronomasia with the root *n-ṣ-r* develops a historical depth for the image of the patron. The root *n-ṣ-r* first and foremost refers to the name of the Nasrid Sultanate and its dynasty, founded by Muhammad I (Muhammad b. Yusuf b. Nasr), who came from the clan of Banu Nasr, also known as Banu al-Ahmar, and who ruled in Granada between 1237 and 1273.[106] While the Form I verb of *n-ṣ-r* means "to help, aid, assist; to render victorious, let triumph; to protect, to save" and the verbal noun *naṣr* means "help, aid, support; victory; triumph," the Form II verb draws on a secondary meaning of the root and denotes "to make someone Christian," i.e., to convert someone to Christianity.

The poetic punning on the dynastic name and the variety of meanings derived from its root are exploited to the fullest by the poet. For instance, referring in the first poem to the sultan as "of the family of Saʿd and of the Banu Nasr tribe, who helped / and sheltered the one who 'ascended the Ladder,'" the poet places emphasis on the Nasrids' progenitors, who "helped" (*naṣarū*) the Prophet in the *miʿrāj* (Ascent) (1.8). A similar *tajnīs* is employed in the last verses of the second poem as well, which again make reference to Nasrid genealogy: "May it always—the blood of Nasr—in triumph (*naṣr*) and / happiness (*saʿd*) build whatever it wants wherever it wants" (2.8). Here, however, further puns, or, perhaps, a double *tajnīs* can be detected. The Form III verb of the root *s-ʿ-d* (to help, to assist, to aid) is at once a *tajnīs* on Saʿd, the name of the Nasrids' ancestors, and a reference to their assistance in the Prophet's *miʿrāj*, both of which appeared in the preceding poem (1.8). As Ibn al-Khatib stated in his *Iḥāṭa* with regard to the genealogy of the Nasrids, "...there are abundant references in many writers to the fact that the Nasrid house descends from Saʿd b. ʿUbada, lord of the tribe of Khazraj and Companion of the Prophet."[107]

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Even though the poet dispenses with *tajnīs* based on the root *n-ṣ-r* in the last verses of poem 3, he makes a reference to the Nasrids' dynastic genealogy, praising Yusuf I's "enchantments" (3.7), and stating that his "main glory [comes] from Khazraj" (3.8). The poet refers to the Khazraj tribe once more, but this time by its other name, *Anṣār*, by which the tribe is known in the Qur'an.[108] Thus, in the last verses of the remaining poem (4.8), Yusuf I's lineage is linked in a *tajnīs* to "triumph": "Because he is the chosen of the Ansar, may his kingdom always / continue to have triumph (*naṣr*) and may he continue to lead in the religion."

This gesture was particularly important with regard to dynastic claims, since Yusuf I's father, Isma'il I (r. 1314–25), was a matrilineal descendant of the founder of the dynasty, Muhammad I—Isma'il I's mother, Fatima, was Muhammad I's granddaughter. Isma'il I took the throne in a revolt against Sultan Nasr (r. 1309–14), the last ruler in the direct line of descendants of Muhammad I.[109] The struggle for power between the two sides of the family, *al-dawla al-ghālibiyya* (the victorious state) and the collateral branch of the Banu'l-Ahmar termed *al-dawla al-Ismā'īliyya* (after Isma'il I), predated Isma'il I's reign and continued between the Nasrid princes through the reign of Muhammad V (1354–59 and 1362–91).[110] Consequently, the poet's reiteration of Yusuf I's genealogy and the Nasrids' dynastic ties to the Companion of the Prophet links Yusuf I's triumphs to those of the prophetic faith itself.[111] Thus, it can be seen that the ideological constructions of the *fakhr* part of the poems were built in part on multiple *tajnīsāt*, in which the image of the ruler Yusuf I is central.

When one considers that Ibn al-Jayyab works self-consciously within the tradition of *badī'* poetics, and hence, his use of the term *tajnīs* bears the more precise, technical meaning of paronomasia, the frequent etymological punning in the poetic text may be seen as the principal figurative manifestation of the "relatedness" of the decorative design. For, if *tajnīs* is primarily the type of verbal similarity that works through variations upon a single root, then one might well recall with Fernández-Puertas that the whole decorative scheme and, in fact, the overall design of the architecture of the Alhambra derive, likewise, from a single root, literally the square root of two equal to the proportion of the diagonal of a square to its side.

Study of paronomasia based on the root *j-m-'* in poem 3 revealed a more particular relationship that Ibn al-Jayyab drew between poetry and architecture as artistic forms of gathering. In this light, it is possible to move beyond the general notion of similarity to view *tajnīs* as a strong form of "relatedness," gathering elements from the various horizontal areas of the decoration (figs. 8 and 9a–d), or different bands within an area, into an interconnected whole. Hence, while it would be true to state that the eight-pointed stars in the two consecutive bands of the third area are similar despite the difference in scale, what is more important is their relation to other star-motifs elsewhere in the overall parietal decoration: the eight- and sixteen-pointed stars in the dadoes of ceramic mosaics and the twelve-pointed stars in the cupola. Moreover, this broader form of "relatedness" develops from the more specific function of *tajnīs* as it appears within the design of a given band, since the star motifs serve as a root out of which the rest of the design radiates. Thus, at one and the same time, the *tajnīs* generates a variety of polygonal forms as a visual paronomasia within individual bands (a "play on visual motifs," as one might say a "play on words"). The star explodes into a myriad of small particles, and yet the star motif still serves to gather the different bands together in an interrelated composition of the whole elevation that belies the diversity of media.

It is the "relatedness" of the different horizontal bands that provides the underlying harmony of the decoration of the *qubba* in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, and it may be discovered in many aspects. One might no doubt corroborate Fernández-Puertas's findings by examining the geometry of the elements and the proportional relations that govern them. But on a different scale, one might also note the relatedness established, most obviously, by the presence of all three types of decoration—vegetal, epigraphic, and geometric—in all four major horizontal areas. More subtly, relations are also created between different decorative types in different bands through visual analogies in their deployment. The derivation of diversity from a common root of *tajnīs*, the antithetical alternations of *muṭabbaq*, the internal repetitions of *tarṣī'*, and the visual pauses produced by *mughaṣṣan*, as Ibn al-Jayyab understood them, all contribute to the coherence and harmony of the diverse, but related forms of the overall visual composition.

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V. DYNAMIC RELATIONS

One might well consider Ibn al-Jayyab's *tajnīs* on *b-d-ʿ*, the root of *badīʿ*, the key to understanding the aesthetic code of the decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. The root appears throughout the four poems, now referring to the architecture ("marvels [*badāʾiʿ*] of stucco," 3.4), now to the sultan (the superlative form—*abdāʿ*—in reference to the face of Yusuf I, 3.7), and now to poetry itself, as the mediator between the two ("It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badīʿ* poetry: *mujannas, muṭabbaq, mughaṣṣan, muraṣṣaʿ*," 3.6). But, given the frequent use of epigraphy in Islamic art, including the prominent deployment of poetic inscriptions in architectural decoration and other media, I wish, by way of conclusion, to suggest a wider scope.

The use of *waṣf*, i.e., description, in the service of ekphrasis is well attested in Arabic poetry as in other poetic traditions. But where poetry is inscribed on the very objects that the verses purportedly describe—from metalwork to architecture—an alternative or additional purpose may well be inferred. A visual description of what stands before the eye, after all, is largely superfluous. Rather, the capacity of poetry to speak of its own figurative devices can be summoned to give voice to inanimate objects—nowhere more dramatically than in the use of prosopopeia (i.e., a first-person voice speaking for an otherwise mute subject), which is an oft-used trope in Arabic and Persian poetic epigraphy and especially notable in the Alhambra, though not a device named or employed by Ibn al-Jayyab in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*.[112]

And what does this poetry say? Not, I suggest, merely that the visual images in the verses resemble the object, but rather that the dynamic relations between visual elements may be articulated and understood by analogy to poetic figures, which would have been familiar to the cultivated beholder and exemplified in the inscriptions at hand. Careful consideration of poetic figuration as it is found in epigraphy, therefore, can enrich the resources of visual analysis while speaking a language literally inscribed in the cultural milieu of the object of study.

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APPENDIX I

Formulaic inscriptions and Qur'anic verses[113]

1. The patio

It appears that only formulaic inscriptions seen in many other precincts in the Alhambra have been preserved in the patio that precedes the principal hall (*qubba*). Inscribed in Kufic on the stucco decoration, they read: "The kingdom and eternity belong to God" (*al-mulku li-llāhi wa'l-baqā'u*); "Eternal glory—forgiveness for its lord" (*al-ʿizzu al-qā'imu li-ṣāḥibihi al-ʿāfiyatu*); "Eternal kingdom—forgiveness for its lord" (*al-mulku al-dā'imu li-ṣāḥibihi al-ʿāfiyatu*); and "Praise to God for the benefit of Islam" (*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi ʿalā niʿmati al-islām*).

2. The principal hall (qubba)

The text of the inscriptions around the double-light window on the main axis of the hall is only partially preserved. It reads: "Glory to our lord the sultan, king, conqueror, and warrior...(sul)tan the martyred, holy, the deceased Abu'l-Walid Ismaʿil, May God help him with his victory" (*ʿizzun li-mawlānā al-sulṭāni al-maliki al-muẓaffiri al-mujāhidi...ṭāni al-shahīdi al-muqaddasi al-marḥūmi Abī'l-walīd Ismāʿīl ayyadahu Allāhu bi-naṣrihi*).[114]

A phrase, written in knotted Kufic, which reads "God is the best guardian and most merciful" (*Allāhu khayrun ḥifẓan wa-huwa arḥamu al-rāḥimīna*), is repeated in each of the two large cartouches. The cartouches are executed in carved stucco and are located in the lower part of the adjoining walls in each of the four corners of the hall. It is these cartouches that are framed by a poem in each corner.

In the south corner (to the right of the entrance), in a band situated between the band with the crenellation motif and the panels with radiating stars, all three forming a part of the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaic, the text of the inscriptions reads: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. God's blessing and peace on our lord Muhammad and on his family" (*bi-smi Allāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīmi ṣallā Allāhu ʿalā sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa-ʿalā ālihi wa-sallama taslīman*). This text is followed by the inscription of Sura 113, *al-Falaq* (Daybreak), which is a brief invocation, asking God for protection from the evil: "Say: 'I seek refuge in the Lord of Daybreak from the mischief of his creation; from the mischief of the night when she spreads her darkness; from the mischief of conjuring witches; from the mischief of the envier, when he envies.'"[115]

In the west corner (to the left of the entrance), executed in the same technique and in a location similar to that of the inscription above, the text reads: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. God's blessing and peace on our lord Muhammad and on his family and companions" (*bi-smi Allāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīmi ṣallā Allāhu ʿalā sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa-ʿalā ālihi wa-ṣaḥbihi wa-sallama taslīman*). This text is followed by Sura 112, *al-Ikhlāṣ* (Oneness), a declaration of God's absolute unity: "Say: 'God is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him.'"[116] It should be noted that the Qur'anic verses inscribed in the ceramic dadoes were only partially preserved.[117]

Three short inscriptions, each consisting of two lines of rhymed text of religious content, are found in each of the three niches of the main room.[118] The first text is the following: "I praise God for his constant favor, as his power and glory deserve. And I bless the chosen Prophet and his noble Companions and family" (*Allāha aḥmadu fī ʿamīmi nawālihi / ḥamdan yaḥiqqu li-ʿizzihi wa-jalālihi / thumma al-ṣalātu ʿalā al-nabiyyi al-mujtabā / wa-ʿalā ṣaḥābatihi al-kirāmi wa-ālihi*). The second inscription reads: "Praise of God is delicious satisfaction: you will employ your tongue to repeat it" (*ḥamdu Allāhi ratʿatun ladhīdhatun wa-taʿmalanna al-qawla fī tardīdihi*). The third one reads: "Praise to God for prosperity he has given day and night. I hope that, as he did in the past, he may favor me in the future" (*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi ʿalā mā manaḥā / min anʿumin tatrā aṣīlan wa-ḍuḥā / arjū kamā anʿama fīmā qad maḍā / laʿallahu fīmā baqiya an yasmaḥā*).

Formulaic words and phrases appear as a repeated element in the parietal decoration executed in carved stucco. They read: "The riches you possess come from God" (*wa-mā bi-kum min niʿmatin fa-mina Allāhi*); "Power [belongs] to God" (*al-qudratu li-llāhi*); "Glory [belongs] to God" (*al-ʿizzatu li-llāhi*); "Dominion [belongs] to God" (*al-mulku li-llāhi*); "Happiness" (*al-ghibṭatu*); "There is no conqueror but God" (*wa-lā ghāliba illā Allāh[u]*); and "Greatness to God" (*al-ʿaẓīmatu li-llāhi*).

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APPENDIX II

Poems by Ibn al-Jayyab inscribed in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*[119]

Poem 1

1. Of this tower (*burj*), which is grand among the towers,
the Alhambra is proud, like a crown.
2. *Qalahurra* on the outside, while it conceals within
a palace (*qaṣr*) that emits a burning light.
3. In it there are marvels of workmanship, single (*afrād*) and paired (*azwāj*),
that were made comparable in terms of proportions (*nisab*).
4. Skillfully-made ceramic tiles in its walls
and floor are like marvels of brocade (*dībāj*).
5. It has been an honor to the faith that forced
captive slaves built it.
6. Dressed in a *ṭirāz* of glory, as in them [the walls] appears
the name of Our Lord (*mawlānā*) Abu'l-Hajjaj.
7. Magnanimous, brave, generous king [is]
sustenance to the one who implores, rain to the one who hopes.
8. Of the family of Sa'd and of the Banu Nasr tribe, who helped (*naṣarū*)
and sheltered the one who "ascended the Ladder" (*ṣāḥib al-mi'rāj*).

1. *burj-un ʿaẓimu al-shaʾni fi'l-abrāj*
qad bāhat-i al-Ḥamraʾ-u minhu bi-tāj-i
2. *qalahurra ẓaharat lanā wa-stabṭanat*
qaṣr-an yuḍiʾu bi-nūrihi al-wahhāj-i
3. *fīhā badāʾiʿu ṣanʿatin qad nuẓirat*
nisaban min al-afrādi wal-azwāj-i
4. *fa-ṣanaʾiʿu al-zallīji fī ḥīṭāni-hā*
wal-arḍi mithla badaʾiʿi al-dībāj-i
5. *wa-kafā bi-ʿizzi al-dīni an qad sukhkhirat*
fīhā mamālīku min al-aʾlāj-i
6. *labisat ṭirāza al-fakhri lammā an badā*
fīhā (i)smu mawlānā Abī al-Ḥajjāj-i
7. *maliku al-jalālati wal-basālati wal-nadā*
ghawthu al-ṣarīkhi lahu wa-ghaythu al-rāj-ī
8. *min āli Saʿdin min Banī Naṣrin wa-man*
naṣarū wa-āwaw ṣāḥiba al-miʿrāj-i.

Poem 2

1. Never has there arisen so great a monument (*maṣna'*):
its fame spread through every land.
2. God has a tower (*burj*) that looks like a lion,
great and ardent, so beware of its attack.
3. Alhambra is embellished by it to the extent that it takes pride in its beauty, like someone who is drunk.
4. *Qalahurra* inlaid among the celestial bodies,
it is next to Pleiades and Pisces.
5. In its fabrication and ceiling of carpentry,
it unfurled skillfully as much art as it desired.
6. It [the tower] reveals Yusuf to us, his face
like the sun that a night can never hide.
7. Because of it we love everything that delights us;
and [with it] we are protected from everything that bewilders us.
8. May it always—the blood of Nasr—in triumph (*naṣr*) and
happiness (*saʿd*) build whatever it wants wherever it wants.

1. *mā mithla hādhā al-maṣnaʿi al-aʿlā nashā*
fa-ḥadīthuhu fī kulli ṣuqʿin qad fashā
2. *li-llāhi min burjin ilā al-asadi ntamā*
sāmin wa-ḥāmin fa-ḥdharū an yabṭishā
3. *zīnat bihi al-Ḥamrāʾu ḥattā annahā*
tuzhā bi-ḥusni ḥalāhu zahwa mani ntashā
4. *qalahurra zaḥamat nujūma al-jawwi fī*
falakin fa-jāwarati al-thurayya wal-rishā(')
5. *ammā mabānīhā wa-farʿu najāratin*
fal-ṣanʿu fīhā qad taʾannaqa kayfa shā('a)
6. *abdat ʿalaynā min muḥayyā Yūsuf*
shamsan wa-lākin laysa yaḥjabuhā al-ʿishā(')
7. *fīhi ḥababnā kulla khayrin sarranā*
wa-bihi kafaynā kulla khaṭbin adhashā
8. *min āli naṣrin dāma fī naṣrin wa-fī*
saʿdin fa-yabnī mā yashāʾu kamā yashā('u).

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Poem 3

1. This monument (*maṣnaʿ*) embellishes the Alhambra,
   It is the abode of the peaceful person and of the warrior.

2. *Qalahurra* was set as a palace (*qaṣr)*
   So, say: it is a stronghold or a gathering place for happiness.

3. The beauty (*bahāʾ*) of the palace (*qaṣr*) is distributed between its four directions (*jihāt*), the sky (*samāʾ*), and the earth (*arḍ*).

4. Marvels of stucco and tiles
   [it] holds, but the carpentry of its ceiling is even more marvelous.

5. In storing so much treasure it triumphed
   in going up and in rising to the highest heights.

6. It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badīʿ* poetry: paronomasias, antithesis, caesuras, and *muraṣṣaʿ* (*mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, *mughaṣṣan*, *muraṣṣaʿ*).

7. If Yusuf is there, his face is a marvel
   that accumulates all enchantments.

8. The main glory [comes] from Khazraj, whose traces in the religion are a thunder with light that spreads.

1. *qad zayyana al-Ḥamrāʾ hādhā al-maṣnaʿu*
   huwa lil-musālimi wal-muḥāribi marbaʿu

2. *qalahurra qad ūdiʿat qaṣran fa-qul*
   hiya maʿqalun aw lil-masarrati majmaʿu

3. *qaṣrun taqassamati al-bahāʾu samāʾuhu*
   wal-arḍu minhu wal-jihātu al-arbaʿu

4. *fī al-jiṣṣi wal-zallīji minhu badāʾiʿu*
   lākin najāratu saqfihi hiya abdaʿu

5. *jumiʿat wa-baʿda al-jamʿi uḥkima rafʿhā*
   lil-naṣbi ḥaythu lahā al-maḥallu al-arfaʿu

6. *yaḥkī badīʿa al-shiʿri minhu mujannasun*
   wa-muṭabbaqun wa-mughaṣṣanun wa-muraṣṣaʿu

7. *abdā lanā min wajhi Yūsuf āyatan*
   fīhā takāmalati al-maḥāsinu ajmaʿu

8. *min Khazrajin al-fakhru al-ulā āthāruhum*
   fī al-dīni ṣāʿiqatun bi-nūrin tasṭaʿu.

Poem 4

1. It honors the Alhambra, this tower (*al-burj*), which dominates the
   skies and which was conceived by the most noble imam.

2. *Qalahurra* outwardly, on the inside a palace (*qaṣr*)
   So, say: it is a stronghold or a dwelling for happy tidings.

3. Its walls (*ḥīṭān*): in them there are markings (*raqūmun*) that disarm the most eloquent,[120]
   and their beauty (*ḥusn*) is ineffable.

4. They surprise; and each part equals another part in proportion (*nisba*), and so it is a poem (*muwashshaḥ*) and a literary work (*muṣannaf*).[121]

5. Wherever you look, there are different designs (*nuqūsh*)
   always, either polychromed (*muzakhraf*) or gilded (*mudhahhab*).

6. A marvelous edifice was made to manifest [itself] by wisdom,
   that which only the caliph Yusuf achieved.

7. If the kings compare their glories,
   his [glory], the Qur'an itself tells us.

8. Because he is the chosen of the Ansar, may his kingdom always
   continue to have triumph and may he continue to lead in the religion.[122]

1. *qad sharrafa al-Ḥamrāʾa burjun mushrifu*
   fīʾl-jawwi dabbarahu al-imāmu al-ashrafu

2. *qalahurra fī ḍimnihā qaṣrun fa-qul*
   hiyā maʿqalun aw lil-bashāʾiri maʾlafu

3. *ḥīṭānuhā fīhā raqūmun aʿjazat*
   amadda al-balīghi fa-ḥusnuhā lā yūṣafu

4. *rāqat wa-nāẓara kullu shaklin shaklahu*
   fī nisbatin fa-muwashshaḥun wa-muṣannafu

5. *mahmā laḥaẓta raʾayta nuqūshan wushshiyat*
   anwāʿuhu fa-mudhahhabun wa-muzakhrafu

6. *mabnan badīʿun abrazathu ḥikmatun*
   mā ḥāzahā illā al-khalīfatuYūsuf

7. *malikun idhā iftakhara al-mulūku fa-fakhruhu*
   fī al-dhikri yatlūhu ʿalaynā al-muṣḥafu

8. *min nukhbati al-Anṣāri dāma li-mulkihi*
   naṣrun, lahu fī al-dīni saʿyun muzallafu

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NOTES

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1. Cynthia Robinson, "Marginal Ornament: Poetics, Mimesis, and Devotion in the Palace of the Lions," *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 185. The arguments articulated in this essay were presented in a preliminary form by Robinson at the Word and Image Conference in 2005 in Philadelphia. See also Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).
2. Grabar, *Alhambra*, 101.
3. The work of José Miguel Puerta Vílchez stands apart. Well versed in medieval texts on aesthetics, philosophy, and theology, and employing the principles and methodology of semiotics, Puerta Vílchez sought to identify and interpret the signification and symbolism of the messages encoded in particular architectural and decorative forms and to situate them within a unified aesthetic system for the whole Alhambra. His monographs are seminal works in the field of medieval Andalusian studies: see José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, *Los códigos de utopía de la Alhambra de Granada* (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1990); José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe: Al-Andalus y la estética árabe clásica* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1997); José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, "El vocabulario estético de los poemas de la Alhambra," in *Pensar la Alhambra*, ed. José Antonio González Alcantud and Antonio Malpica Cuello (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial, 2001), 69–88. Puerta Vílchez's studies guided the work of many scholars, among them D. Fairchild Ruggles, Valérie Gonzalez, and the author of the present essay. See D. Fairchild Ruggles, "The Eye of Sovereignty: Poetry and Vision in the Alhambra's Lindaraja Mirador," *Gesta* 36 (1997): 180–89; Valérie Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: I. B. Tauris/Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2001); and Olga Bush, "'When My Beholder Ponders': Poetic Epigraphy in the Alhambra," in *Pearls from Water, Rubies from Stone: Studies in Islamic Art in Honor of Priscilla Soucek*, ed. Linda Komaroff, Artibus Asiae 66, 2 (2006): 55–67.
4. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 189.
5. Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
6. Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
7. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 185–214.
8. I return to the complex term *muraṣṣa'* below.
9. Antonio Fernández-Puertas, *The Alhambra* (London: Saqi, 1997), 312.
10. Emilio García Gómez, *Poemas árabes en los muros y fuentes de la Alhambra* (Madrid: Publicaciones del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos, 1996). In their reading of the crucial verse from the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, García Gómez, somewhat disparagingly, and Puerta Vílchez, with considerable theoretical sophistication and historical depth, both emphasized mimesis in their understanding of the relationship between the poetic epigraphy and its architectural setting. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 44–46; Puerta Vílchez, "El vocabulario estético," 81–82.
11. See especially Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 88–160.
12. Ibid., 189. Robinson also suggestively extends her discussion of the aesthetics of *badī'* poetry to other artistic media in her examination of Cordoban ivories of the Umayyad and *fitna* periods. She considers these objects as a visual counterpart of the linguistic artifice of *badī'* poetry, noting that their design is "governed and informed by *badī'*'s opaque complexities." Ibid., 134–40.
13. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 191.
14. Ibid., 192.
15. Ibid., 193, emphasis added.
16. Ibid., 195.
17. Ibid. I cite Robinson's translation, including her ellipses.
18. Cited in Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Poesía árabe clásica: Antología titulada "Libro de la magia y de la poesía,"* ed. and trans. J. M. Continente Ferrer (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1981), 40.
19. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 5.
20. Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 45.
21. The formulaic and Qur'anic inscriptions require historical and religious contextualizations that call for separate treatment. The work on poetic inscriptions here, however, may offer a conceptual and methodological frame for such a study, suggesting modes of textual analysis and pointing toward the art historical questions concerning the selection of a particular sura or formulaic inscription for a particular site in any given precinct of the Alhambra, and perhaps other Islamic architectural monuments where epigraphy plays a prominent role in the decoration.
22. For an analysis of architectural features of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* within the context of Nasrid architecture and the history of its conservation, see Antonio Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios nazaríes: siglos XIII–XV* (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1995), 129–36. For the geometrical scheme of the ground plan and a brief discussion of the decoration of the interior, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 28–29 and 312–14, respectively. Basilio Pavón Maldonado's analysis of the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaic that decorate the interior can be found in his *Estudios sobre la Alhambra*, 2 vols. (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1977), 2:21–29. The place of poetic epigraphy within the decorative scheme is discussed in Sophie Makariou, "Étude d'une scénographie poétique: L'oeuvre d'Ibn al-Jayyâb à la tour de la Captive (Alhambra)," *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003): 95–107.

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23. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 312.
24. The place of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* within this system of communication, shared by all structures of the outer wall of the Alhambra, *madīna* and *qaṣaba* (military quarters) alike, may be a contributing factor to its relative neglect in the vast bibliography on the Alhambra; the history of the transformation of the Alhambra from a military to a palatial complex has yet to receive the sustained attention it requires. In this regard, I limit myself here to remarking that as an architectural type, the *Qalahurra* plays a significant role in that history, since in al-Andalus the term refers to a building that is at once a fortification and a royal residence. As I will discuss below, this composite nature of the *Qalahurra* proves crucial to the poetic figuration of the epigraphy.
25. Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 129. The dimensions of the principal room and the patio are relatively small, which, combined with insufficient light, precludes taking photographs that would incorporate the entire interior space. For this reason, I provide many partial images to give as complete a view of the interior as possible.
26. Among examples of a *qubba* in the palaces of the Alhambra are the Hall of the Comares, the Hall of the Two Sisters, the Hall of the Abencerrajes, and the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII (*Torre de las Infantas*). On the typology of a *qubba*, see Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Salas con linterna central en la arquitectura granadina," *Al-Andalus* 24 (1959): 197–220. For a more general introduction to the typology of Nasrid residential architecture, see Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 19–26.
27. I will address the question of the restoration of the ceiling below.
28. For a summary of scholarly works on the building, as well as bibliographic references, see Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 129. For the conservation work that took place in the 1980s, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 312 nn. 4 and 5.
29. The schematically outlined grid of the decoration indicated on the piers shows the areas where the loss of original decoration occurred, and is a result of the approach to conservation in the Alhambra that took hold in the last quarter of the twentieth century.
30. For transliterations and translations of the formulaic inscriptions, and translations of the Qur'anic verses, see Appendix I. See also n. 22 above.
31. María Jesús Rubiera Mata pointed out instances of words in the parietal inscriptions that are the result of erroneous restoration work undertaken over the course of the twentieth century. Her work on Ibn al-Jayyab's *Dīwān* allowed her to reconstruct the original compositions that were inscribed in this building. García Gómez benefited greatly from this scholar's work, although he indicated certain differences between his version of the Arabic and the readings proposed by Rubiera Mata. See María Jesús Rubiera Mata, "Los poemas epigráficos de Ibn al-Yayyāb en la Alhambra," *Al-Andalus* 35 (1970): 453–73; María Jesús Rubiera Mata, "Poesía epigráfica en la Alhambra y el Generalife," *Poesía* 12 (1981): 17–76.
32. I refer to the Arabic texts of these four poems as published in García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 137–42, and have adopted his numbering of the poems and verses. In order to facilitate discussion of specific images or figures of speech, I will cite the texts throughout by parenthetical reference to poem and verse (rather than page number). Hence, for instance, the aforementioned verse will be cited as "3.6," that is, poem 3, verse 6.
33. For transliterations and translations of all four poems, see Appendix II; for the location of these poetic inscriptions, see fig. 5. My translations aim at a literal adherence to the original texts, instead of seeking to render them into a more fluid and poetic English, in order to preserve as nearly as possible the features that I discuss in my analysis. I am greatly indebted to García Gómez in my versions, but occasionally highlight discrepancies in notes to my translations or in the discussions in the body of my text.
34. In order to explain a certain point in my analysis that turns on a connection between descriptive elements in the poems, I note that the metaphorical terms, *jihāt* (directions), *samā'* (sky), and *arḍ* (earth), correspond to walls, ceiling, and floor, respectively.
35. The terms that appear in this verse—*mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, *mughaṣṣan*, and *muraṣṣa'*—are passive participles of Form II verbs. A detailed discussion of the terms will follow shortly in the analysis of the poems.
36. The literature on metaphor is immense, both with regard to medieval sources, rooted in Aristotle's *Poetics*, and modern scholarship. Regarding the former, Kamal Abu Deeb provides an extremely useful introduction, underlining the contributions of the major literary critics of the Abbasid period, such as al-Farabi (d. 950), Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 908), and 'Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 1079). See Kamal Abu Deeb, "Literary Criticism," in *'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Serjeant and G. Rex Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 339–87. For a comprehensive treatment of the subject, see Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2003), 319–403. Kamal Abu Deeb's discussion of al-Jurjani's theory of metaphor has been crucial to the present discussion. See Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1979). Abu Deeb reviews the striking similarities between al-Jurjani's concepts and modern linguistic theories of metaphor as articulated by Ferdinand de Saussure and I. A. Richards; see Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī's Theory*, 24–64. Paul Ricoeur reviews the literature on metaphor and makes original philosophical contributions to the discussion in *The Rule of Metaphor* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).
37. On the significance of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's *Kitāb al-Badī'* for the tradition of literary criticism on poetry, see S. A. Bonebakker, "Ibn al-Mu'tazz and *Kitāb al-Badī'*," in Ashtiany et al., *'Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 388–411.
38. Abu Deeb, "Literary Criticism," 339–87.
39. Ibid.

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40. Ibid., 347.
41. Ibid., 368–69.
42. For the impact of Abbasid poetry on the poetry of al-Andalus during the Umayyad period, see Salma Khadra Jayyusi, "Andalusī Poetry: The Golden Period," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 317–66.
43. Examples include works by the most distinguished poets from each of the following periods. For the Umayyad period: Ibn Hani' al-Andalusi (d. 973), Ibn Darraj al-Qastalli (d. 1030), and the Umayyad prince al-Sharif al-Taliq (d. ca. 1009); for the *taifa* period: Ibn 'Ammar (d. 1084), al-Mu'tamid (d. 1095), the Abbasid ruler of Seville, Ibn Hamdi (d. 1132), and al-Himyari (d. 1048), who compiled one of the first Andalusian anthologies of poetic and rhymed-prose compositions, entitled *al-Badī' fī waṣf al-rabī'* (The Most Ingenious Descriptions of Spring); for the Almoravid and Almohad periods: Ibn Khafaja (d. 1139), Ibn Quzman (d. 1160), and al-Rusafi (d. 1177). See James T. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry: A Student Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 3–71; Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 92–140.
44. Alexander Knysh, "Ibn al-Khaṭīb," in *The Literature of al-Andalus*, ed. María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 358–71.
45. For a survey of Nasrid literature, see Celia del Moral, "La literatura del período nazarí," in *Estudios nazaríes*, ed. Concepción Castillo Castillo (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1997), 29–82. On the cultural production of the Nasrid court—literary, artistic, and scientific—see José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, "La cultura y la creación artística," in *Historia del Reino de Granada*, ed. Rafael G. Peinado Santaella, 3 vols. (Granada: Universidad de Granada–El Legado Andalusí, 2000), 1:349–413.
46. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 137. Puerta Vílchez commented on the disparaging remarks of García Gómez and María Jesús Rubiera Mata with regard to the literary merits of Ibn al-Jayyab's and Ibn Zamrak's poetry in the Alhambra, suggesting that the conventionality of their compositions should be attributed not to the limits of their talents, but rather to the restricted poetic goal that they served of creating a vision of dynastic power. See Puerta Vílchez, *Los códigos de utopia*, 106–7 n. 1.
47. Grabar, *Alhambra*, 205.
48. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 285–87. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, too, underlines the "emotive significance" of repetition; see Suzanne Pinckney, "Toward a Redefinition of 'Badī'' Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 12 (1981): 1–29. My reading of the poems, especially my understanding of the terms of poetic figuration, is based on Meisami's work on classical Arabic and Persian poetry. For her analysis of architectural imagery in poetry, see Julie Scott Meisami, "Palaces and Paradises: Palace Description in Medieval Persian Poetry," in *Islamic Art and Literature*, ed. Oleg Grabar and Cynthia Robinson (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 21–54; Julie Scott Meisami, "The Palace-Complex as Emblem: Some Samarran Qaṣīdas," in *A Medieval Islamic City Reconsidered: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Samarra*, ed. Chase F. Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69–78.
49. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*, 67.
50. On *fakhr* as a frequent device in the poetic inscriptions of the Alhambra, see García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 42–46. Puerta Vílchez elaborates on the aesthetic terms employed in epigraphy to praise architecture in *Los códigos de utopia*, 146–51, and "El vocabulario estético," 75–83.
51. For an extended discussion of poetic structure, see Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 55–143.
52. Puerta Vílchez's semiotic analysis of poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra is especially useful in his discussion of other themes associated with the ruler's power, such as victory, distinguished lineage, generosity, temporal and spiritual power, and luminosity; see Puerta Vílchez, *Los códigos de utopia*, 104–28. Elsewhere, Puerta Vílchez considers the term *badī'* and the derivatives of its root in conjunction with such aesthetic terms as *ḥusn* and *jamāl* (beauty), and *kamāl* (perfection), within a broader context of poetic imagery in the epigraphy of the Alhambra; he proposes that these terms participate in the construction of a symbolic portrait of the Nasrid ruler as a divinely inspired creator of the architecture and its decoration, and that beauty as a concept has divine origin. See Puerta Vílchez, "El vocabulario estético," 75–76.
53. The complexity of composition, as one of the aspects shared by poetry and ornament, has been discussed in studies by Gülru Necipoğlu, *Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 210–15; and Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 73–102. I consider the place of textiles in the aesthetic interrelationships of architecture and poetic inscriptions in Olga Bush, "A Poem is a Robe and a Castle: Inscribing Verses on Textiles and Architecture in the Alhambra," forthcoming in the proceedings of the Eleventh Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, held in Honolulu, Hawaii in September 2008. For some of the preliminary arguments, see Olga Bush, "Architecture, Poetic Texts and Textiles in the Alhambra" (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2006).
54. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45.
55. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45; Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314.
56. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45. Puerta Vílchez and Fernández-Puertas follow García Gómez's interpretation of the terms with regard to the decoration. See Puerta Vílchez, "El vocabulario estético," 81–82; Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314.
57. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 96–97.
58. Ibid., 16–18 and 19–79.
59. Makariou, "Étude," 95–107.
60. Ibid., 103.

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61. Ibid., 99.
62. Ibid., 99 n. 12.
63. Ibid., 99.
64. Ibid.
65. Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Waṣf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 155–232.
66. On the geometric patterning (known in Spanish as *lazo*), its construction, and its variations, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 94–96 and 332–49.
67. The epigraphy contains Qur'anic verses, which are partially preserved. For the text, see Appendix I.
68. For the distribution of the dadoes in the room and a summary of their affinities with those in other precincts in the Alhambra, and in other Nasrid constructions, see Pavón Maldonado, *Estudios*, 2:21–29.
69. Ibid., 28.
70. Fernández-Puertas noted that during the early period of Nasrid art, which he dates between 1273 and 1302, the plaster panels were carved *in situ*. Afterwards, plaster panels were made with the aid of a mold. See Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 92. However, José Antonio Ruiz de la Rosa and Antonio Almagro Gorbea have discovered the traces of a geometric grid on plaster panels made with artisan's tools in the Patio of the Harem in the Palace of the Lions in the Alhambra, which belongs to the period of Muhammad V, as well as in a contemporaneous house in Granada, located on Cobertizo de Santa Inés Street, no. 4. See José Antonio Ruiz de la Rosa, "La arquitectura islámica como forma controlada: Algunos ejemplos en al-Andalus," in *Arquitectura en al-Andalus: Documentos para el siglo XXI*, ed. Rafael López Guzmán and Mauricio Pastor Muñoz (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1995), 44.
71. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 96–97.
72. Ibid., 96–97 and 312–15.
73. Ibid., 314.
74. These screens are a result of restoration work. See Pavón Maldonado, *Estudios*, 2:21–29. Further research is needed in order to establish whether their present-day design corresponds accurately to the original plasterwork.
75. *Artesonado* is a timber roof construction in the shape of an inverted trough, composed of four slanting trapezoidal sides and a flat horizontal panel at the top. There is only limited information available today regarding the original ceiling. For a brief, general description stating that the ceiling was constructed of four main decorated panels of wood, see Simón de Argote, *Nuevos paseos históricos, artísticos, económico-políticos, por Granada y sus contornos*, 3 vols. (Granada, 1807), 3:91. This description predates the destruction of the ceiling during the French occupation between 1808 and 1812. The present ceiling is not original, but the result of late nineteenth-century restoration work undertaken by Rafael Contreras. It was rebuilt according to the Nasrid method of constructing *artesonado* ceilings. As Orihuela Uzal pointed out, the present ceiling is related to those preserved in the Palacio of Partal and in the Hall of the Comares. While the ceiling in the *Qalahurra* resembles the former in its size and in the use of clusters of *muqarnas*, its shape—constructed of four main *artesonado* panels—is related to that of the latter, and corresponds to Argote's description of 1807. What is important here, however, is that the design of all three examples is based on the *lazo* (geometric patterning) of radiating stars. Hence, I will consider its decoration in this analysis. For references to Argote's publication and Contreras's reconstruction, see Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y Palacios*, 136.
76. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 92.
77. The treatment of the foliate motifs is examined by Fernández-Puertas. Ibid., 96–104.
78. Ibid., 128.
79. Antonio Fernández-Puertas, "Calligraphy in al-Andalus," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 639–76.
80. Ibid., 667.
81. Emilio García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz sobre la Alhambra* (Madrid: Publicaciones del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1988), 124.
82. The vibrant color scheme is recorded in Owen Jones's drawings of the interior of the Hall of the Ambassadors. See Owen Jones and Jules Goury, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra, From drawings taken on the spot in 1834 by the late M. Jules Goury, and in 1834 and 1837 by Owen Jones Archt, With a complete translation of the Arabic inscriptions, and an historical notice of the Kings of Granada from the conquest of that city by the Arabs to the expulsion of the Moors, by M. Pascual de Gayangos* (London, 1842–45). The same color scheme is shown in William Harvey's drawing, made between 1913 and 1915, of the interior of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*; the drawing belongs to the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Fernández-Puertas has reproduced some of Jones's plates and Harvey's drawing: see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, pls. 25–34 and fig. 154, respectively. In Fernández-Puertas's opinion, Harvey's drawing is "the best colour section ever made and the most faithful to the *Qalahurra*"; see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 312 n. 1. Despite such praise, this scholar raised one objection with regard to the drawing, namely, that the gold leaf, whose traces can be still detected in the stucco panels, was not used as abundantly as depicted in Harvey's and, for that matter, in Jones's color drawings; see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314. The color scheme of the interior as it is depicted in Harvey's drawing, with the use of red and blue pigments for the background and of gold leaf for the foreground elements, such as the epigraphy, is consistent throughout interiors of the Alhambra. Moreover, the accuracy of the saturated, intensely deep blue and red colors in Harvey's drawing was confirmed by recent studies, in which sources for these pigments were identified. See Lucia Burgio, "Microscopy Analysis of Hispano-Moresque Samples from the Alhambra," *V&A Museum Science Report* (June 2004): 1–23; Victor Borges, "Nasrid Plasterwork: Symbolism, Materials, Techniques," *V&A Conservation Journal* 48 (Autumn 2004): 10–14.

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83. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 294–98.
84. Ibid., 296.
85. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 137–42.
86. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 294–98.
87. Ibid., 295–96. In his *Minhāj al-bulaghā' wa-sirāj al-udabā'* (Method of the Eloquent and Lamp of the Literary), al-Qartajanni mentions that the term *tarṣīʿ* is applicable to the arts of poetry and jewelry alike; cited in Puerta Vílchez, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*, 382–83. The term was also used to describe luxury objects studded with precious stones. For examples of such descriptions, see Aḥmad ibn al-Rashīd Ibn al-Zubayr, *Book of Gifts and Rarities = Kitāb al-Hadāyā wa al-Tuḥaf*, trans. and ed. Ghāda al-Ḥijjāwī al-Qaddūmī (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). Michael Roberts has proposed that the link between the craft of jewelry and that of poetic composition can be traced to the period of late antiquity. He notes that "'the jeweled style' with respect to verse and artistic prose was a commonplace; e.g., verses were deemed 'little jewels'." Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 53.
88. For a summary of the definition and use of the term in Arabic and Persian by medieval rhetoricians, see G. Schoeler, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (henceforth *EI2*) (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. "*Tarṣīʿ*." See also Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314, following García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45.
89. Schoeler, "*Tarṣīʿ*."
90. Ibid. Schoeler pointed out that there is no single and consistent meaning of the term's definition; among several possible relationships covered by this term are: an agreement of word patterns in corresponding parts of the two phrases, which in turn could be partially or completely rhymed, and a metrical equivalence in the first parts of the two phrases.
91. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45.
92. Abu Deeb, "Literary Criticism," 371.
93. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 429.
94. Ibid., 253-64. For a concise discussion of the term and its use, see also W. P. Heinrichs, *EI2*, s.v. "*Ṭibāq*."
95. For a study of historical sources with references to *qalahurrāt* in al-Andalus, see María Jesús Viguera and Elías Terés, "Sobre las calahorras," *Al-Qantara* 2 (1981): 265–75. Among extant examples of this type of tower is the *qalahurra* in the *qaṣaba* of Gibraltar, built by the Marinid sultan Abu'l-Hasan between 1333 and 1349; for a study of this tower, see Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Gibraltar, llave y guarda del reino de España," *Al-Andalus* 7 (1942): 168–219.
96. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 175–76.
97. For the dating of the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 16. For Ibn al-Zamrak's use of the term *qalahurra* with respect to that tower, see María Jesús Rubiera Mata, "Ibn Zamrak, su biógrafo Ibn al-Ahmar y los poemas epigráficos de la Alhambra," *Al-Andalus* 42 (1977): 447–51.
98. García Gómez notes that Ibn Zamrak also mentions the captives in a poem located in the Court of the Myrtles. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 96; for the text of the poem, see *Poemas árabes*, 94. On the subject of Christian captives at work on the Nasrid buildings, see Leopoldo Torres Balbás, "Las mazmorras de la Alhambra," *Al-Andalus* 9 (1944): 198–218.
99. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45; Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314.
100. In Form III, *ṭ-b-q* has the meanings "to cause to correlate, compare, contrast something with, to correspond to something," which would reinforce the understanding of visual antithesis as a correlated alternation of corresponding forms.
101. See also Lisa Golombek's concept of "an imperfect symmetry," which she develops in her essay, "The Function of Decoration in Islamic Architecture," in *Theories and Principles of Design in the Architecture of Islamic Societies*, ed. Margaret B. Ševčenko (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1988), 35–45.
102. On *tajnīs*, its use, and some examples, see Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 247–53; W. P. Heinrichs, *EI2*, s.v. "*Taǧnīs*."
103. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 247.
104. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, eds., *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), s.v. "Rhetorical Figures."
105. Ibid.
106. Scholarship on the history of the Nasrid Sultanate is extensive. Several monographic studies, among them Rachel Arié, *L'Espagne musulmane au temps des Nasrides (1232–1492)* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1973); Aḥmad Mukhtār al-ʿAbbādī, *El reino de Granada en la época de Muhammad V* (Madrid: Publicaciones del Instituto de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1973); and Leonard Patrick Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), still remain the most comprehensive and complete in their analysis of the primary sources. For a brief overview of Nasrid genealogy, see Antonio Fernández-Puertas, "The Three Great Sultans of al-Dawla al-Ismāʿīliyya al-Naṣriyya Who Built the Fourteenth-Century Alhambra: Ismāʿīl I, Yūsuf I, Muḥammad V," *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 7, 1 (1997): 1–25.
107. Harvey, *Islamic Spain*, 29.
108. For a history of the adoption of the *nisba "al-Anṣārī"* in pre-Nasrid al-Andalus, its understanding in the context of the Qur'anic use of words based on the root *n-ṣ-r*, and therefore, its ideological implications for the legitimization of the Nasrid dynasty, see Maribel Fierro, "The Anṣārīs, Nāṣir al-Dīn and the Naṣrids in al-Andalus," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31 (2006): 232–49. I wish to thank the anonymous reader for bringing this essay to my attention.
109. See Harvey, *Islamic Spain*, 171–90; Fernández-Puertas, "Three Great Sultans," 1-25.
110. Fernández-Puertas, "The Three Great Sultans," 1–25.
111. Fierro points out the importance and frequent use of words with the root *n-ṣ-r* in Nasrid poetry, inscriptions, and coinage; see Fierro, "Anṣārīs," 245.

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112. Although the use of prosopopeia in the poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra has received some scholarly attention—Puerta Vílchez, *Los códigos de utopia*, 146–54; Ruggles, "Eye of Sovereignty," 180–89; Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 9; and Bush, "'When My Beholder Ponders,'" 55–67—a more focused study is still needed. I began a broad survey of prosopopeia in inscriptions in both Islamic architecture and luxury objects under the Nasrids and elsewhere in Bush, "Architecture, Poetic Texts," 42–122, and will return to this topic and other issues related to epigraphy in Islamic art and architecture in a monograph now in preparation.
113. The transliterations of all texts in Appendix I follow the original texts in Arabic published by Emilio Lafuente Alcántara, *Inscripciones árabes de Granada* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2000), 177–85.
114. The name of the reigning sultan was not preserved, but Lafuente Alcántara suggested that the text must have referred to Yusuf I, since the name of his father, Isma'il I, who indeed was murdered, appears in this inscription. Lafuente Alcántara, *Inscripciones árabes*, 185.
115. See *The Koran*, trans. N. J. Dawood (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 434.
116. *The Koran*, 434.
117. Lafuente Alcántara, *Inscripciones árabes*, 178–79.
118. The transliterations of these inscriptions follow the original texts in Arabic published in García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 133–34 and 144–45.
119. I follow the Arabic text as published by García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*. For the location of the poems, see the plan of the tower-palace (fig. 5).
120. The meaning of the root *r-q-m* is "to write, to dot a book, to put stripes on a cloth"; *raqm* also stands for a type of variegated cloth. Although this poetic line refers to the parietal decoration, I prefer to translate the word *raqūmun* as "markings," in order to convey what seems to me the poet's intentional ambiguity in his choice of a word that could encompass all types of parietal decoration. In this regard, my translation differs from that of García Gómez, who translated *ḥīṭānuhā fī-hā raqūmun* as "wall ornamentation," employing the Spanish term *ataurique*, which derives from the Arabic *al-tawrīq* and is used to refer to a decorative design based on vegetal forms. Rubiera Mata, however, chose the word "inscriptions," based, no doubt, on the primary meaning of the root and on the parietal epigraphy itself. See María Jesús Rubiera Mata, *Ibn al-Yayyāb: El otro poeta de la Alhambra* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1994), 114. For an extended discussion of this particular verse and its fuller implications for the analysis of the parietal decoration, see Bush, "Architecture, Poetic Texts," 201–3 and 236–39.
121. It should also be noted that the word *nisba* could be rendered as "prestige." I agree with García Gómez's translation as "proportion," especially in light of Ibn al-Jayyab's employment of the words *muwashshaḥ* and *muṣannaf*, which refer to specific literary works, distinct in their particular structures. Although García Gómez omitted these words from his translation of the verse, they are significant in considering the interrelationship between the verbal and visual contents and thus merit attention. For a sustained discussion of these terms, see Bush, "Architecture, Poetic Texts," 201–3.
122. Rubiera Mata pointed out that each of the four poems in the *Dīwān* is preceded by the same epigraph, which reads: "He [Ibn al-Jayyab] spoke and it was inscribed in the corner of the new *qalahurra* of the Alhambra" (*al-qalahurra al-jadīda bi'l-Ḥamrā'*). This connection between the poet's recitation of a poem and its immediate use as a decorative embellishment echoes a statement made some years later by Ibn Zamrak with regard to his own compositions. See Rubiera Mata, "Los poemas epigráficos," 459 n. 29.

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